

A COMPARISON OF PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE WORK

"THEY JUST WANT THE BEST PERSON, THE MOST NORMAL PERSON":

COMPARING WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND EMPLOYERS

PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE WORK

By

STEPHANIE SCHUER, B.A (HON)

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 Stephanie Schuer, September 2005

MASTER OF ARTS (2005)
(Geography)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: "They Just Want The Best Person, The Most Normal Person": Comparing
Women With Disabilities and Employers Perspectives on Service Work

AUTHOR: Stephanie Schuer, Honours B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Robert D. Wilton

NUMBER OF PAGES: viii, 161

ABSTRACT

This thesis compares women with disabilities and employers' perspectives on service work in Hamilton, Ontario in order to further understand the experiences of disabled women in contemporary service employment. Positive and negative experiences from the women interviewed are assessed and compared to employers' perspectives on hiring and working with disabled workers in the service sector. With the recent restructuring of the welfare state, more disabled people are being encouraged to enter the paid workforce by the state. This situation is problematic because there are indications that enduring barriers to employment continue to exist, and the restructuring of the service sector raises questions concerning the types of work people with disabilities are being hired for. Evidence from this thesis suggests that there is often a fundamental disconnect between what many employers are looking for in a worker and what the women interviewed were able to offer while at work. It can be suggested that both data sets point to the enduring norms of able-bodiedness in the workplace. This study suggests that the women are not always able to approximate what the employers construct as the ideal worker, however the women have created various coping strategies in order to best approximate the ideal. The type of emotional, embodied work that is required by the majority of the employers in the service sector can be physically and emotionally draining for women with disabilities. This research also suggests that different bodies experience different outcomes in different situations. The women interviewed made it clear

that they experience their bodies differently at work than they would at home, because of the demanding nature of service work and the performative, emotional nature of their work. The research conducted in this thesis responds to the absence of studies comparing the perspectives of both women with disabilities experiences and employers perspectives on service work.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Robert Wilton, for all of his help and support over the past two years. Your guidance, contributions and suggestions have been invaluable during the research process and the writing of my thesis. I couldn't have done it without you Rob! Also, thank-you to Dr. Richard Harris and Dr. Mary Tremblay for being on my committee, I really appreciated it.

As my research was part of a larger study, I would like to thank SSHRC, for funding the larger study. I would like to express my gratitude to all of the participants who were involved with the study, both the employers and the employees. Finally, thank you to the non-profit agency that allowed me to be involved in the agency, and let me be involved in their job find club program.

Last, I would like to thank my family and friends for their continued support and encouragement. Thanks also to the School of Geography and Earth Sciences, especially Ann Wallace.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Statement of Interest.....	1
1.2 Objectives of Study.....	2
1.3 Definition of Disability.....	3
1.4 Organization of Thesis.....	4
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	6
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Conceptualizing Disability.....	7
2.3 The Changing Nature of Employment.....	17
2.4 Disabled Women and Men in Contemporary Employment.....	24
2.5 Summary and Conclusion.....	34
Chapter 3: Research Methods.....	36
3.1 Research objectives.....	36
3.2 Research Process.....	36
3.3 Analysis.....	45
Chapter 4: Disabled Women's Perspective on Service Work.....	47
4.1 Introduction.....	47
4.2 Women's experiences: Employment Relations.....	48
4.3 Women's experiences: The Labour Process.....	59
4.4 Accommodations.....	78
4.5 Conclusion.....	86

Chapter 5: Employers' Perspectives on Service Work and Disability.....	88
5.1 Introduction.....	88
5.2 Constructing the Ideal Worker.....	89
5.3 Hiring and Working With Disabled Employees.....	109
5.4 Conclusion.....	126
Chapter 6: Concluding Discussion.....	128
6.1 Summary of Research.....	128
6.2 Significance of the Research.....	136
6.3 Limitations and Implications for Future Research.....	141
Reference List.....	143
Appendix A: Employee Interview Guide.....	152
Appendix B: Employer Interview Guide.....	156

List of Tables

Table 3.1 - Selected characteristics of client population and provincial disabled population.....	39
Table 3.2 - Occupations most commonly occupied by women clients by disability.....	40
Table 3.3 - Mean Hours and wages, and percentage of jobs full-time by gender and disability.....	42

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Interest

Research has long shown that people with disabilities have been marginalized in society and under-represented in the workplace. Physical and social barriers continue to exist, including lack of physical access to employment, lack of accommodations by employers in the workplace, lower levels of education for people with disabilities, as well as perceptions and attitudes. Furthermore, research has found that women with disabilities are concentrated at the lower end of the income scale, with 60 percent of this population having an income below the poverty line (Torjman, 2001). However in recent years, with the restructuring of the welfare state, and increasingly strict qualification criteria for social assistance, more disabled people are being encouraged to enter the paid workforce by the state. This creates a potentially problematic situation to the extent that:

1. There is evidence of enduring barriers and problems facing people with disabilities trying to gain employment;
2. At the same time, there is an added pressure on disabled women and men to find work as the real value of social assistance incomes decline; and

3. The continued restructuring of many service sector jobs raises important questions about the kinds of work people with disabilities are being hired for.

Quantitative studies have shown that people with disabilities are unequally distributed in the labour force, toward low end, low skilled employment, with little room for advancement. Furthermore, these studies have suggested that disabled women are concentrated in service-based jobs, in sectors such as retail, administrative positions, or cleaning. Using qualitative methods, this study will further explore disabled women's experiences in service sector employment. The thesis will look specifically at the how disabled women gain and maintain paid work, along with how they respond to the employer demands for speedy service and appropriate emotional and embodied performances while at work. Unlike existing studies, the thesis will compare and contrast employers and disabled workers' views about the employment experience, using data collected from interviews with both groups. This comparison will provide additional insight into employers' expectations of workers with disabilities, as well as the strategies women employ to maintain paid work and meet the demands of particular service sector workplaces.

1.2 Objectives of Study

This study aims to further investigate how disabled women gain and maintain paid work in the service sector. In addition, this thesis will investigate employers'

role in helping or hindering disabled women in gaining and maintaining paid work. Using qualitative research – specifically in-depth interviews with disabled women in the labour force and local employers – it will help to further understand the strategies and coping methods used by disabled women to gain and maintain paid work, as well as the demands employers place on workers in different service sector occupations. Three specific objectives can be identified:

1. To document women with disabilities' experiences of service employment in the current context, as well as the strategies they use to obtain and keep paid work
2. To compare and contrast employer and worker perspectives on the nature of service sector employment, the nature and extent of available accommodation, and the extent to which disabled people can be successfully employed in service jobs; and
3. To discuss the conceptual and policy-related implications of this research.

1.3 Definition of Disability

For the purpose of this thesis, disability will be defined using a combination of the social model along with the concept of embodiment. The social model is grounded on the idea that social barriers structure disability, and that it is not the impairment that disables the person, it is the social factors that are disabling. Scholars argue that the social model has limitations, and state that the model does not account for meaning and representation, and it also neglects personal

experience. Embodiment defines the body as a biological entity, but one which is involved in, and inscribed with meaning, in specific social and cultural settings (Hall, 1999). This embodied definition of disability, allows one to think about disability, by moving between and beyond the medical and social models of disability. In order to account for meaning and representation, the concept of embodiment is introduced because even when social barriers are removed, the physical constraints of our bodies could still limit participation in society. What this brings to the research is personal experiences and everyday accounts of struggles and achievements in the lives of the respondents.

1.4 Organization of Thesis

This thesis will be organized as follows. Following the introduction, chapter 2 will provide a review of the relevant literature for this thesis. The review will examine recent literature on how disability is conceptualized, as well as the changing nature of employment and existing work on the experiences of disabled men and women in contemporary employment. Chapter 3 describes the context for the current research, outlines the research objectives for the study, and explains the process of data collection and analysis. The analysis is divided into two chapters dealing with the perspectives of workers and employers. Chapter 4 focuses on disabled women's opinions of, and experiences at, service work. This chapter is organized into three main sections, dealing with (1) employment relations; (2) the labour process; and (3) the nature of accommodations in the workplace. Chapter

5 examines employers' perspectives on disability and service work. This chapter is divided into two main sections dealing with (1) employers' conceptions of the ideal worker for service work; and (2) their views on, and experiences of hiring, disabled workers. Finally, chapter 6 provides a summary of the research and discusses the conceptual and policy significance of the work.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine some of the existing literature relating to the issue of disability and paid employment. The chapter is organized into three main sections. The first provides an overview of recent theoretical developments with regard to how we understand disability as a medical, social and geographical phenomenon. The second provides an overview of literature on recent economic developments, with attention paid to the growth and change of service sector employment. Of particular relevance for this thesis is the growth of 'servicing' or 'high touch' work, and the demands that this type of employment places on a disproportionately female workforce. The third section examines recent developments in the literature on disabled people's experiences of paid work. Particular attention is paid to a number of issues including the barriers and opportunities people face when seeking employment, their representation in different sectors of the economy, as well as problems once in the workplace – for example, seeking accommodation. Finally, a brief summary and conclusion is provided.

2.2 Conceptualizing Disability

The way that we understand 'disability' has changed significantly in recent decades. While the concept continues to be a focus of intellectual debate, it is possible to identify at least three perspectives on the nature of disability.

Understanding the similarities and differences between these perspectives is an important starting point for this review.

The individual or medical model of disability

Until recently, definitions of disability have tended to focus on the 'disabled' individual. In no small part, this is due to the overwhelming influence of medical institutions and professionals who emphasize the physiological nature of disability and the need to 'fix' individuals who are disabled (Dorn and Laws, 1994).

Brisenden (in Oliver, 1990, 5) suggests: "the problem... is that medical people tend to see all difficulties from the perspective of proposed treatments for a 'patient'." This line of thinking has helped to produce and reproduce what has been termed the *medical model* of disability. Disabled people's inability to participate fully in social life is seen to be a product of individual impairment. A clinical diagnosis of impairment is the primary factor defining the identity for people who have any type of impairment (Shakespeare, 1999). For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) until recently defined impairment and disability in the following ways:

Impairment: Any temporary or permanent loss or abnormality of a body structure or function, whether physiological or psychological. Impairment

is a disturbance affecting functions that are essentially mental (memory, consciousness) or sensory, internal organs (heart, kidney), the head, trunk or limbs

Disability: A restriction or inability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being, mostly resulting from impairment

(see Barbotte et. al, 2001).

The medical model of disability was dominant throughout much of the twentieth century. One implication of its dominance during this period was the way in

which disabled people came to be defined as the 'other' where their fundamental difference from able-bodied persons was located entirely in the failure of their bodies to function 'normally' (Shakespeare 1994). There are parallels here with the experiences of other groups such as women and racial minorities, in the sense that the identification of supposedly fundamental bodily differences – male/female, white/black, able/disabled – has been used to justify the classification of disabled people as somehow inferior to, or less valuable than, individuals without disabilities (Young 1990). This creates the binary of those who consider themselves normal and those being gazed upon – the others. The dominant group maintains privilege for itself, and power over the 'other' by identifying itself as normal (Thomson, 1997, Dear et al, 1997). The medical model is focused on individualizing the phenomenon of disability – treating the individual and their symptoms, as opposed to treating the social processes and policies that hinder disabled people's lives (Linton 1998).

Although this individualized model is strongly associated with biomedical conceptions of impairment/disability, its influence is also pervasive in other social

institutions. We can think, for example, of the way in which the welfare state's responses to disabled people has typically been to create specific support programs for people who are deemed unemployable – people whose disabilities appear to threaten the productive activities of the workplace. Similarly, the growth of charitable institutions for the disabled was based on the assumption that their bodily difference made them unable to fend for themselves, and that they required the benevolence of other people – a non-disabled society more generally – to take care of them (Barnes 1991). In popular culture, the portrayal of disabled people as tragic characters struck down by disability, and/or heroic in their struggles to overcome bodily limitations, reproduces the commonsense understanding of disability located in the individual (Norden 1996).

The social model of disability

The social model of disability was created to challenge the underlying assumptions of the medical model. The model is structured on the idea that disability is sourced in and caused by social barriers (Oliver 1990, 1996). An influential definition was developed by Disabled People's International (the first organization to be exclusively controlled and run by disabled people) and subsequently modified in a British Council of Organizations of Disabled People study (see Barnes, 1991). This definition positions disability alongside impairment in the following way:

Impairment is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment.

Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers.

The social model of disability posits a clear separation of the physical, mental or sensory condition experienced by an individual, and the problems that people with impairments face in society on a regular basis. The model argues that it is not impairment that causes disability, it is the outcome of social arrangements that work to restrict the activities of people with impairments by placing social barriers in their way (Thomas 1999). In other words, it is not the impairment that disables a person; it is the social factors that are disabling. This model was formed to counter the previous individual model of disability, which typically “blamed the victim”, allowing disabled people to realize that their impairment was not to blame for their exclusion in society, social organizations took little or no account for those with physical impairments (Tregaskis 2002: p.458). For many, the social model provided a new outlook on disability, and allowed disabled people to conceptualize problems experienced in everyday life as a consequence of social barriers rather than individual failure or inadequacy. Society was now seen as the real barrier for disabled people.

The underlying theoretical assumptions of the social model are grounded firmly in the historical materialist tradition. Oliver (1990), one of the key social model scholars, argued that the origins of disabled people’s exclusion from ‘mainstream society’ could be traced to the onset of the industrial revolution, the demands of the capitalist economy and the ideological shifts that accompanied

this transition. The introduction of the wage labour market, the growth in routinized factory work and workers' loss of control over the nature and pace of the labour process led disabled people to be characterized as unproductive and increasingly excluded from paid work (see also Oliver, 1996). Gleeson (1999) argues that because of the change from rural to urban production and the separation of home and work, disabled people also found it increasingly difficult to access factory employment. These changes had a profound impact on impaired people. As Oliver (1990, 27-28) argues:

Changes in the organization of work from a rural based, cooperative system where individuals contributed what they could to the production process, to an urban, factory-based one organised around the individual waged laborer had profound consequences... disabled people came to be regarded as a social and educational problem and more and more were segregated in institutions of all kinds including workhouses, asylums, colonies, and special schools, and out of the mainstream of social life.

Importantly, Gleeson (1999) has demonstrated that while people with impairments were excluded from formal employment in the factories, some tried to avoid confinement in institutions by taking up informal, and often extremely marginal, trades such as match sellers and rag pickers which could be performed in the public spaces of the industrial city.

Recognizing the potential of this theoretical formulation, geographers have worked to enrich the social model, demonstrating that social space actively *disables* people with impairments. The design and construction of social environments influence both the extent to which impaired people are able to access everyday spaces, and the degree to which these social spaces mark

'disabled' individuals as out of place. Kitchin (1998), for example, has argued that the social relations of space reproduce and maintain the exclusion of disabled people in two ways – spaces are social texts that convey to disabled people that they are “out of place” and space is organized to keep disabled people “in their place” (Kitchin 1998, 345). This is said to be a direct function of class and capital, as they clearly reproduce disablist social relations. Kitchin also uses Young's classification of oppression to illustrate the variety of power relations and processes of exclusion in relation to disabled people. Kitchin writes:

In the first instance, disabled people are rendered 'powerless'; power relationships between able-bodied and disabled people are maintained through political means... Secondly, disabled people are marginalized within society and social life: power relationships are maintained through social means... Thirdly disabled people are exploited within the labour market: power relationships are maintained through the material means... Fourthly, the maintenance of power can be achieved through violent means... Lastly, power relationships are maintained through the use of ideology through a form of cultural imperialism (Kitchin 1998, 346).

Imrie, (1996) argues that oppression of disabled people in the workplace has little to do with their impairments, but is related to an inaccessible built environment, furthering the idea that space perpetuates the exclusion felt by disabled people. Society is based on the dominant 'ableist' values that might be more usefully conceptualized as 'culturally imperialist' values. Mobility can be seen as a way to perpetuate the marginalization of disabled people as the often lack of mobility, and inaccessible spaces force disabled people to stay away. Issues such as sidewalks without ramps, inaccessible buildings, lack of elevators, or disabled

parking spots, are common barriers that disabled people must contend with every day, in order to experience the environment. Trips must quite often be carefully planned out so that transportation is arranged, in order for the disabled person to make any trips, even something as simple as going to a medical appointment or to work. Clear & Gleeson (2002) argue that even with existing legislation and a reevaluation of the workforce, more needs to be done to improve the situation. There is a need for *enabling* justice that would: “build social and environmental infrastructure to support disability inclusion within the mainstreams of society” (Clear & Gleeson 2002, 49).

Towards embodiment

Notwithstanding its conceptual and political value, recent arguments have been made suggesting that the social model of disability has limitations as well. Two related critiques are of note here. The first is that the social model fails to adequately account for meaning and representation (Shakespeare 1994). The second is that the social model neglects personal experience and the body insisting that the “physical differences and restrictions are entirely socially created” (see, for example, Morris 1991; Crow 1996; Hall 1999). In recent years, the World Health Organization has itself recognized the limitations of both the medical and social models:

On their own, neither model is adequate, although both are partially valid. Disability is a complex phenomenon that is both a problem at the level of a person's body, and a complex and primarily social phenomena. Disability is always an interaction between features of the person and features of the

overall context in which the person lives, but some aspects of disability are almost entirely internal to the person, while another aspect is almost entirely external (WHO 2002, 9).

The WHO has proposed combining elements of the both models into a 'bio-psychosocial' conception of disability, and this has formed the basis for the organization's ICF scheme, or International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.

In the context of academic debate, a similar move has been made through the concept of 'embodiment' (e.g., Hall 1999). Embodiment defines the body as a biological entity, but one which is involved in, and inscribed with, meaning through specific social and cultural settings (Hall, 1999). This embodied definition of disability allows one to think about disability by moving between and beyond the medical and social models of disability. Crow (1991) argues that while it is true that "external disabling barriers may create social and economic disadvantage but our subjective experience of our bodies is also an integral part of our everyday reality". Therefore, even if social barriers and constraints are removed impairment will still exist, and may constrain people from fully participating in society because their impairments act as a barrier. In addition, Marks (1999) argues that in order to identify the oppressive nature of dis-ablism, there is a need to communicate personal experiences. By sharing stories and narratives, the embodied experiences of disabled persons are brought into the public domain. Numerous scholars have used this approach to look at disability. Butler and Bowlby, (1997, p.413) argue that the conceptual connection between

the individual's embodied experiences and the social context has to be acknowledged in order for the disability rights movement to progress in fighting for equal rights and social justice.

Not surprisingly, the call for an understanding of the embodied experiences of disability has drawn important theoretical strength from feminist scholarship (Shakespeare 1994). Feminist perspectives have developed considerable expertise with regard to the politics of identity and difference (Domosh 1996: p. 421). Moreover, feminist theory has been centrally concerned with the processes through which women come to be constructed as embodied others in male-dominated societies. In this way, feminist perspectives can offer insight for many groups who have experienced marginalization in society, including disabled women and men (Shakespeare 1994). Butler and Bowlby (1997) argue, for example, that like women and racial minorities, disabled people are considered inferior because of their biological nature, and that biology supposedly determines their social behaviour.

Building on the concept of embodiment, feminist geographers have increasingly been writing on the topic of disability. In an important recent book, Moss and Dyck (2002) use the concept of embodiment to create what they term a 'radical body politics', a perspective which offers insight into experiences of body and illness by looking at how: (1) illness inscribes women's bodies with an 'ill' identity, (2) limits women's bodily movements through space, (3) reconstitutes their sense of self and (4) transforms the minutiae of their daily life. The authors

argue that the intention of the book is not simply to theorize the body or to 'read' ill bodies, but to provide a way to understand the experience of women with chronic illness by rethinking bodily inscriptions and limits imposed by contemporary culture. As they suggest, bodies need to be understood "as both discursive formations and material entities through which we experience these [physical and social] environments (Moss and Dyck 2002, 10). Moreover, they recognize that the nature of embodiment is inherently dynamic, with experiences of, and meanings attached to, bodies shifting in the context of "daily negotiations of subjectivity, identity and space" (51).

What this means is that we need to think more carefully, both in theoretical formulations and in empirical research, about the embodied experience of disability that confront specific people in specific contexts. As they state:

...the body is always already 'in context', socially constructed and materially present, as part of a collective, imbued with power, and political being. *Bodies in context* exist spatially in relation with other bodies, recursively constituted through tangible and intangible things and processes – escalators, street corners, apartment blocks, capital, income, race, knowledge, beliefs – at any given time and place (2002, 52).

In this sense, the experience of disability might be quite different depending upon the specific context. For example, we can think of the differences between home, work and public space, or between environments that are familiar/unfamiliar, accessible/inaccessible, or welcoming/ hostile. Within the context of this thesis, the social model's emphasis on the role of the capitalist economy in 'disabling' people with impairments remains important as a broader theoretical consideration. However, the approach advanced by Moss and Dyck provides a

useful way to critically examine women's embodied experiences of impairment/disability in the context of *specific* work environments, and the ways in which these experiences are shaped by factors including the organizational expectations and practices, relations between/among workers and managers, and the tactics used by women themselves to 'fit' into workplaces that are more or less accommodating of bodily difference.

2.3 The Changing Nature of Employment

To understand the significance of specific workplaces to the experience of disablement, it is necessary to examine recent changes to service sector employment.

Restructuring and the service sector

In the early postwar period, manufacturing represented a key component of North American economies, organized for the most part around the Fordist model of mass production. This mode of production was characterized by centralized, hierarchical workplaces (Smith, 1998), with a clear and often detailed division of labour, and a clear separation of workers from management. 'Standard employment' in this context was typically full time, full-year and was relatively secure, although it should be noted that this was a privilege that accrued disproportionately to male workers (Vosko 2000). The relative balance between capital and unionized labour during this period resulted in relatively

high wages and stable employment for blue-collar workers in return for low levels of worker militancy.

However, as numerous scholars have noted, these types of jobs began to decline with the advent of economic restructuring in the 1970's and the subsequent decline of manufacturing employment in Canada and the U.S. (e.g., Barker and Christensen 1998; Krahn & Lowe 2002). Restructuring continued to have a profound effect on the economy throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. Globalization and internationalization of production led to the continued loss of manufacturing to overseas locations in search of cheaper labour costs. At the same time, developed countries were characterized increasingly by the emergence of 'new economies' characterized by the growing dominance of service sector employment, as well as the emergence of some new forms of manufacturing (for example, in the high-tech sector). While these changes are complex, two related developments in the nature of work are of particular importance here.

The first is the growth of 'flexible' or 'non-standard' work arrangements. Nonstandard work arrangements include those jobs that differ from the postwar standard of full-time permanent employment (Cranford et al 2003). The most common form of nonstandard work is part-time work, but scholars also include other arrangements such as multiple-job holding, own-account self-employed, and temporary (contract) positions (Vosko, 2000). Estimates suggest that these four categories of non-standard work accounted for about one third of all

employed working age Canadians in 1998 (Krahn and Lowe, 2002). Part-time work, which represented approximately six percent of employment in 1960, accounted for twenty percent of employment by the late 1990s (Krahn 2001). The growth of this type of work is subject to a range of interpretations. For some, nonstandard work offers greater flexibility for both employer and worker. While companies save money through outsourcing, sub-contracting and downsizing, workers exercise *choice* to work part-time, hold multiple jobs, or become self-employed. However, critical scholars have noted that while workers make choices, they are made under conditions not of their own choosing. Analyses of nonstandard work indicate that on average they typically pay lower wages, provide fewer benefits, come with less security, and are less likely to be covered by existing labour laws (Krahn and Lowe, 2002; Cranford et al 2003). It is these trends that have led some scholars to characterize forms of nonstandard employment as 'precarious work' (Rodgers 1989).

This does not mean that contract work for professionals involving substantial income and control over work should be viewed as precarious. However, other forms of contract work may be extremely precarious. Lower-skilled service industries are key sources of precarious employment, in part because of their relative size in the economy (Krahn and Lowe, 2002). There is also considerable variation in the likelihood of someone being employed in this type of work. Inequalities along dimensions of gender, race/ethnicity, citizenship and age mean that women, visible minorities, recent immigrants, youth and older

people are more likely to be in nonstandard jobs (Rodgers, 1989; Smith, 1998; Vosko, 2000). Perrons (2002) argues that the growth of flexible work has been made possible in part because of the feminization of some workplaces. Likewise, McDowell (2001) draws attention to the increasingly feminized division of labour, where women workers are disproportionately likely to work non-standard jobs compared to men, who still dominate the full-time positions (see Cranford et al 2003 in Canada). However, the literature on the changing nature of work has not paid much attention to disability as a dimension of inequality in the context of paid work, or the impact of recent changes on disabled workers.

A second trend, already hinted at above, involves the growing polarization of employment. The service sector is more polarized than the manufacturing sector of the postwar period, with high-skilled, high paying business and information technology jobs at one end, and low-skilled, low-wage servicing jobs at the other (Vosko 2000). This polarization has also been characterized by a distinction between 'high tech' jobs on the one hand and 'high touch' occupations that are increasingly prevalent in advanced industrial economies on the other (McDowell, 2001, 455).

'Hi-touch' service work: emotional and embodied labour

The nature of employment in 'high touch' jobs – for example, retail sales, food services, cleaning and janitorial work, care work – is distinct from the work of the manufacturing sector. While physical labour remains an important dimension in

some jobs – for example, stacking shelves, cleaning floors, transferring people from beds to chairs – there is also often an added dimension of emotional performance required in the interaction between worker and client/customer. The rapid growth of this type of service work has prompted considerable interest in the ways that the workers' emotional and embodied performances are exploited by the employers interests of capital accumulation, and what this means in terms of the cultural meanings associated with and inscribed onto bodies engaged in specific labour processes.

In service work, emotional labour plays an important role. In a seminal study of the emotional work required among flight attendants, Hochschild (1983, 147) argued that jobs requiring emotional labour have three characteristics in common:

1. Face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact is required with the public
2. Workers are required to produce an emotional state in another person (such as gratitude)
3. Employers are able to control the emotional activities of workers through training and supervision.

Emotional labour can be draining for many employees as they are constantly required to 'act' in certain ways that best represents the company and the services which they are selling. Furthermore, emotional labour is different from other types of work – for example, physical labour, administrative work, and so on – because workers are expected to manage or bridle their emotions in ways that ensure an effective service encounter between worker and customer/client. For example, a server at a restaurant must always smile while performing their

duties, regardless of whether they feel like smiling or not. In more recent work, Crang (1994) has argued that service interaction are becoming more routinized, allowing for employees to speed up the provision of service by having prepared statements and orders of service to interact with consumers. But Seymour (2000) has suggested that it is possible to identify two types of emotional labour: standardized and personalized service work. Standardized jobs require workers to perform a standard interaction with customers, often producing a robotic feel to their performance. By contrast, personalized jobs have certain guidelines for interaction, but allow workers to control more of the interaction with customers. In these jobs in particular, service employers are looking for workers to possess the soft skills such as personality, aesthetically well presented and other social skills. For most service sector jobs, employers are putting more emphasis on soft skills than hard skills, so that the ideal candidate will encompass technical, social and aesthetic skills (Nickson et al, 2005).

At the same time, expectations for 'bodywork' are also being recognized as an important part of servicing work, where the bodily performance is used to facilitate the delivery of a 'service product' (Wolkowitz, 2002). The world of paid employment under capitalism had traditionally been constructed as rational and objective, characteristics that are valued as culturally masculine (Domosh and Seager 2001), with disembodied male positioned as the ideal worker (McDowell and Court 1994). However, the growth in interactive service occupations (Leidner 1991) – occupations that are often highly feminized - has complicated

this picture, with the body now seen as a site of contestation and exchange, and workers expected to use their looks, personalities and emotions to manipulate outcomes, and sell products.

This development has particular implications for women, given the gendered roles in service work and valuing of heterosexual femininity including traits such as docility and attentiveness (McDowell and Court 1994, 733). Crang (1994) also argues that women experience performance work differently from men and their performances are based on gendered stereotypes of feminine and masculine norms. For example, workers uniforms in restaurants often exploit the female body. However, the implications of bodywork extend beyond gender to other dimensions of bodily difference. In an ethnographic study of banking work, McDowell (1997) has given particular attention to the way in which both workers and occupations are mutually constituted, and the implications of this process for workers' bodies. Based on data collected in the banking industry, she argues that:

Workers with specific social attributes, from class to gender to weight and demeanour, are disciplined to produce an embodied performance that conforms to idealized notions of the appropriate 'servicer' (121).

She goes on to suggest that in order to achieve this disciplining of bodily performance the culture of organizations – in the sense of implicit and explicit rules of conduct – has taken on increasing importance in coaching workers with regard to desirable embodied attributes such as physical appearance, weight, bodily hygiene and dress.

These conceptual developments in thinking about the nature of service employment are important in the context of this thesis, not least because they point to the ways in which people's bodies and emotions are integral to the performance of work in many service occupations. At the same time, there has been little consideration given in this broader literature to the implications of these developments for women and men with disabilities. How, for example, do expectations for appropriate emotional performance and bodywork impact on disabled women in terms of their ability to secure employment? How do disability and gender intersect in the workplace to shape individuals' embodied experiences?

2.4 Disabled Women and Men in Contemporary Employment

While disability has received little consideration in the broader literature on the changing world of employment, there is a significant body of literature dealing with barriers and opportunities for labour force participation among disabled people. It is useful to review this work here.

Representation in paid employment

There is a general consensus that disabled people continue to be underrepresented in, and excluded from, the workforce (Chouinard 1999; Fawcett, 1996; Torjman, 2001). Some estimates suggest that more than two thirds of disabled adults remain out of work (Statistics Canada, 1991; Despouy,

1993; Russell, 1998). Their relative absence from paid employment is a primary reason for their continued 'dependency' and high rates of poverty. More generally, England (2003) has argued that the systematic exclusion of disabled people from the workplace effectively denies them access to a key site of power in contemporary capitalist economies.

The situation may be particularly difficult for disabled women. Fewer disabled women are working when compared with disabled men and non-disabled women (Fawcett 2000). As a consequence, adult disabled women are more likely to live in poverty (Chouinard 1999; Barnartt and Altman 1997; Fawcett 2000). This has led some scholars such as Dyck (1995) to argue that: "women with disabilities have been described as doubly handicapped as gender intersects with physical impairments in circumscribing such women's opportunities, particularly in relation to their participation in paid work" (also Chouinard 1999; England 2003).

Barriers to work

The causes of disabled people's exclusion from, and marginalization within, paid employment are manifold. For example, marginalization of disabled students in the education system may place them at a disadvantage when entering the labour market (Barnes, 1991; Barnes et al., 1999). In many western countries including Canada, disabled youth are much less likely to have completed secondary education (e.g., Kitchin et al 1998; Gleeson, 1999; Fawcett, 1996). Lack of accessible public transportation may make it difficult to get to and from a

place of work (Kitchin et al, 1998). In addition, public assistance programs that do not permit additional earned income also act as a barrier to employment (Blackford, 1993; Russell, 1998). Alongside these factors, employer attitudes act as a key barrier to paid employment for disabled persons (Farina and Felner, 1973; Fuqua et al, 1984; Ravaud et al., 1992; Gooding, 1994). These stereotypes can be linked to the systematic undervaluing of people with physical, mental and learning impairments in capitalist labour markets (Oliver, 1990; Gleeson, 1999). Wilgosh & Skaret (1987) in a comprehensive review of attitudinal studies found that employer attitudes did affect the hiring of disabled people, and in some cases also acted as a barrier to the advancement of disabled employees once within an organization. Some studies have also pointed to the existence of discrepancies between employers' expressed willingness to hire disabled workers and their actual workplace behaviour. This suggests that employer hiring practices may actually represent a greater barrier to paid work than attitudinal studies would suggest.

Kitchin et al (1998), looked at employment experiences of disabled people in Donegal, West Ireland, where focus groups were used to interview disabled people and non-disabled helpers to better understand the experiences of disabled people in their search for access to work. The study found that in general, access to employment for disabled people was limited in a number of ways, such as inadequate training, employers, and other employees attitudes and 'fears' associated with disability. Although disabled people had access to

training schemes designed to overcome educational disadvantage, many respondents expressed doubt that the schemes would ultimately lead to formal employment. As one person in the study argued:

A lot of people I know, when they first get their disability, go into re-education—they learn a language, they learn computers. The problem's not with the disabled person because the person is quite willing to do that—a six-month course on this or a three-month course on that, *it's just getting secure jobs at the end of it* (in Kitchin et al 1998, 793, emphasis added).

This statement is significant in the sense that it connects to the broader impacts of economic restructuring on western economies, and the growth of non-standard service jobs in particular. Disabled people, like women, racial minorities and others, are more likely to face occupational segregation in sectors characterized by this type of employment. Also significant is the fact that many respondents in this study saw the training schemes as a means to overcome boredom and isolation even though they often did not end in formal employment. This fact hints at the broader significance of employment outside the home – going out to work challenges the socio-spatial marginalization experienced by disabled people.

Experiences at work

There is a growing literature examining work experiences (Laws and Radford 1996; Kitchin et al 1998; Reid and Bray 1998). For example, there is evidence to suggest that when disabled people secure paid employment, they are disproportionately located in poorly paid positions (Oliver, 1990), less likely to be

promoted (Steward, 1996; Drum, 1998), and paid less than their non-disabled co-workers (HRDC, 1999). This produces vertical and horizontal occupational segregation for disabled employees. It also holds particular significance in light of the earlier discussion about the expectations for emotional and embodied labour in hi-touch service work.

In a recent in-depth study, Robert (2003) found that forms of oppression were still quite evident within public-sector workplaces. Employees with disabilities in large public-sector organizations are still subject to harassment and alienation in the workplace. Physical segregation of the disabled employee was common among those interviewed, as well as being avoided by others while at work, and dealing with levels of social discomfort from other co-workers and supervisors (145-146). Robert also found that some employees with disabilities felt removed from the labour force, as employers gave them overly simple duties. Another problem Robert found was the harassment disabled people faced at work. Disabled people were subject to harassment, in subtle and blatant forms such as jokes (about them), insensitive comments and sabotage of work tasks. Significantly, Robert concluded employers and organizational cultures in the public sector have a notion of an 'ideal' worker, which is typically white, able-bodied male (also Acker 1990). She also states that other workers are often compared to this 'ideal' worker. Worryingly, she suggests that disabled workers are hired but typically for lower-level jobs, and are retained as employees not for

their value as an employee but as a symbol demonstrating employer is complying with policies and laws.

Elsewhere Dyck (1999) used qualitative data to examine how women with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) deal with the changes their illness brings to their identities in the context of the work environment. She found that while women negotiate the changes in their material bodies, the workplace became a place of risk (Dyck, 1999). Their inability to perform the “normal” duties became a threat to the women’s financial stability in many cases. These women struggled to adapt a “disabled identity”, as they did not want the inscription to have certain consequences in the workplace. Also, the women tended to conceal their illness for as long as possible, or they claimed another illness, such as the flu, or a bad back, an illness that was more socially acceptable in their environment. This fact is important as it points to the ways in which people with disabilities more generally struggle with the issue of disclosure if they suspect that appropriate accommodation will not be readily available. While they may wish to avoid being constructed as different, concealing their illness or impairment may also place themselves at risk. Also significant from Dyck’s (1999) work is the fact that women who were most vulnerable with respect to loss of employment were those in non-unionized, private sector jobs, with low seniority, and with little control over the scheduling or organization of tasks. More generally, Dyck (1999) argues that: “workplace organization, located within social relations shaped by political economy, the social practices of the workplace, and women’s own work histories

all circumscribe the range of options they have in responding to their illness experience”. In this thesis, the intersection of disability with employment relations and workplace organization is further explored in the context of service employment. The expectations for emotional and embodied performance, for example, raise important questions about the demands placed on disabled workers and the types of accommodation they may need in such service work.

Economic change & policy development

The experiences of workers with disabilities have to be understood in the context of changes to the broader political economy. As was noted above, economic restructuring in recent decades has impacted the nature of employment. Initially, some scholars argued that changing nature of work in post-industrial or post-fordist economy might offer new jobs and opportunities for disabled people (e.g., Cornes 1984). Particular attention was paid to the increasing reliance on technology in production systems, and the ways in which this would diminish the importance of physical labour. This perspective can be linked conceptually to Finkelstein's (1980) argument that a post-industrial economy characterized by new technologies would facilitate the *economic liberation* of disabled people. More recent work has tended to be less optimistic. As Barnes et al (1999: 116) note:

Optimism has been expressed that the changing nature of work in advanced capitalist society... offers particular opportunities for some groups within the disabled population, most notably, the younger, better-educated minority. But in the absence of policies aimed at the creation of

a barrier-free work environment the outlook for the majority of disabled people of working age remains bleak.

There are several reasons for this pessimism. The first is that there is good evidence of continued segregation of disabled workers in jobs that offer low wages, and settings where the quality of training is often poor and chances for advancement are few (Roulstone 2000; also Baron et al, 1998; Krahn and Lowe 2002). As was noted above, this situation is both a reflection of the enduring barriers disabled people face and the broader shifts that have occurred in the nature of work, with the downgrading of service work, as well as the growth of short-term contracts and part-time work making living wages and job security elusive (Russell, 1998; Vosko, 2000). While the prospect of part-time work opportunities may appear opportune for women and men whose impairments make full-time work less feasible, questions also arise about the nature of such work, as well as the associated wages, benefits and level of security. Does such part-time work, for example, compensate financially for loss of access to public assistance? Additionally, growth in short-term contract and temporary work raises questions about the extent to which disabled people can build long-term relationships with supportive employers (Jackson et al 2000). Contract and temporary work may also mean employers' are less willing to provide accommodations because they are not making long-term commitment to disabled employees, and because these employment arrangements are designed to externalize companies' labour costs.

Second, in some instances technological advances have allowed for further intensification of work. For example, changes to the nature of the economy have meant an increased preoccupation with productivity and speed in many sectors. Roulstone (2002, 629) states that “the reduction in public sector workforce, rapid switching of transnational manufacturing and the introduction of productivity league tables all contribute to a more disciplined workforce”. Greater capacity for policing speed has been provided by the incorporation of more technology into the workplace to monitor employee performance. Some examples of this include the supermarket checkout monitoring technology that counts the number of products scanned, or McDonald’s concept of maximum service time, where there are time limits placed on employees for every customer (Child 1990 cited in Finnegan et al, 1987; Ritzer 1993). This pre-occupation with speed can be seen as difficult for able-bodied employees, and could quite possibly be impossible for disabled employees.

Third, while governments have become increasingly enthusiastic about promoting paid work for disabled people, recent legislative developments have often not worked to create accessible and accommodating workplaces. Thus, restructuring of the welfare state has placed greater emphasis on work for persons receiving public assistance, including those with disabilities (Torjman, 1997; Capponi, 1998; Roulstone, 2000). However, there has been a move away from employment equity programs based on the need for affirmative action to deal with the systematic disadvantages that confront the disabled population to

rights-based disability legislation that places emphasis on the problems faced by disabled individuals in specific workplaces (Lunt and Thornton, 1994; Hendriks, 1999). Legislation such as the provincial human rights code in Canada, the Americans with Disabilities Act in the United States, and the Disability Discrimination Act in the United Kingdom attempts to counter the discrimination faced by persons with disabilities, but the onus for enforcement is often placed on the individual worker to pursue complaints. Where employers' responsibilities for accommodation are either conceptualized as largely voluntary or where enforcement of reasonable accommodation requirements is limited, outcomes often depend on the willingness to individual employers to work with a disabled individual and/or the determination of the worker to seek appropriate accommodation under the law. Several quantitative studies have looked at employer willingness to comply with legislation. In the UK, Jackson et al (2000) examined employer willingness to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. They found that compliance with the Act was a function of employers' knowledge of the act as well as their personal attitudes towards disabled people. Likewise, in a phone survey with personnel officers in three sectors – transportation, IT and financial services – Stevens (2002) concluded that while most employers were aware of legislation and offered accounts of positive action to meet their legal obligations, the minimal use of government aids to promote and assist the employment of disabled people suggested little concrete change (see also Drum 1998). In Canada, England (2003) critically examined the Federal Employment

Equity Act with regard to the compliance of the 'big six' banks in Canada. She concluded that after 15 years since the legislation has come into effect, the big six banks have achieved limited success in workplace equity for persons with disability.

2.5 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has examined three related bodies of literature. The first was concerned with evolving the medical and social models of disability. In recent years, the social model has offered an important, if flawed, critique of dominant medically based understandings of disability as an individual limitations. In particular, the social model's emphasis on the role of the economy as a key source of disabled people's oppression is pertinent to the focus of thesis on women's labour market experiences. At the same time, recent work has argued for a more 'embodied' approach to disability that recognizes both the cultural significance of bodies in context, and the value of people's embodied experience to a theory of disability. This approach, with its focus on the embodied experience of disability in the specific contexts, provides a useful theoretical resource for this work.

Second, literature on economic restructuring pointed to the changing nature of employment with the growth of flexible or non-standard work, and the dominance of service sector work. The growth of 'hi-touch' service work, for example, has raised important questions about the ways in which employers are

exploiting workers' emotional and embodied performances. While work has focused specifically on the gender implications of these changes, given the feminization of many of these jobs, this literature has not really considered the potential effects of these changes on disabled workers.

Third, empirical research provides evidence that people with disabilities are still significantly under-represented in today's labour market. Due to the changing nature of the labour market, barriers for people with disabilities are ongoing, because of downgrading and the growth of part-time and contract work. Changes to the welfare state promotes work for those receiving public assistance, while at the same time moving away from employment equity. With that being said, a large number of disabled workers are concentrated in the lower-end service sector, or in hi-touch service jobs. There is a need to further explore how disabled women negotiate employment, and more specifically their emotional and embodied performances in service work. In addition, there has been no attempt to compare and contrast employer and employee perspectives on issues such as the meaning of access and accommodation in the workplace (see Jackson et al., 2000).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research objectives

As was outlined at the end of the last chapter, the intent of this thesis is to further understand the experiences of disabled women in contemporary service employment. Specifically, the research objectives of the thesis can be identified as follows:

1. To document the experiences of women with disabilities' in service employment in the current context, as well as the strategies they use to obtain and keep paid work.
2. To compare and contrast employer and worker perspectives on the nature of service sector employment, the nature and extent of available accommodation, and the extent to which disabled people can be successfully employed in service jobs; and
3. To discuss the conceptual and policy-related implications of this research.

3.2 Research Process

In this section, I describe Hamilton as the context for this research, before setting out the research process from recruitment of participants to collection of data.

Research Context

This thesis draws on research conducted in Hamilton, Ontario, a city of approximately 490,000. Like many urban centres, Hamilton experienced economic restructuring in recent decades. Long known as the 'steel city' given the presence of two large steel mills and related industries, the 1980's saw a contraction of the steel industry and the loss of many unionized jobs in manufacturing (Luxton and Corman 2001). By the late 1990s, manufacturing was still the largest single industry sector, with 21 percent of the region's employees. However, service industries, including retail (12.8 percent), health and social services (11.4 percent), and educational services (8 percent) accounted for more than 70 percent of employees (HRDC no date).

The research was conducted as part of a larger study completed in part with co-operation from a non-profit employment service, offering assistance and job skill coaching for disabled people seeking employment. The larger project consisted of three stages. First, the agency's client database was examined to establish the types of work found by people who had used the agency between 1997 and 2001. In this period, approximately 650 people found work with some assistance from the agency. Second, a sample of sixty-two clients participated in interviews to further explore labour market experiences. Third, a sample of fifty employers were interviewed about their attitudes toward, and experiences with, hiring and managing workers with disabilities.¹ This thesis uses data collected

¹ Note that the first two stages were completed by my supervisor and another research assistant, while I completed the employer interviews, along with another research assistant.

from employee and employer interviews, but it is useful to briefly review the profile of the larger client population in terms of work experience.

Summary data for the client population is contained in Table 3.1. On average, clients were significantly younger than the provincial disabled population, which included a substantial number of retired people. Over half of the clients had some form of post-secondary qualification compared with a much smaller percentage of all disabled Ontarians. Given existing barriers, disabled people may feel pressure to take additional training as a way to improve chances of employment, although this is no guarantee they will find work (see Kitchin et al 1998).

Clients' jobs were coded using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Survey* classification for 'occupation at main job'. In general, positions were concentrated in a small number of occupations compared to all provincial employees. Although women clients were more likely to hold feminized jobs such as clerical work, and male clients were more likely to be in positions such as trades helpers and protective services, both had high concentrations in retail sales, sales & service, and food service (Table 3.2). Women worked significantly fewer hours than men, mirroring the gender difference in the larger workforce, but the gendered wage gap was less pronounced among clients (Table 3.3). This may be indicative of the similar concentrations for men and women clients. Both men and women were much less likely to be in full time employment compared with all provincial employees.

Table 3.1: Selected characteristics of client population and provincial disabled population

		Clients (%)	Ontario (%)
Disability	Hearing	6.5	12.6
	Seeing	4.5	5.8
	Speaking	0.4	2.8
	Agility	7.3	27.8
	Mobility	29.7	31.4
	Mental/learning	36.7	14.5
	Other physical	14.9	5.1
Disability	Physical (agility, mobility, other physical)	51.6	—
	Psychiatric	23.2	—
	Sensory (hearing, seeing, speaking)	11.8	—
	Cognitive/learning	13.5	—
Age (years)	15-24	12.0	6.6
	25-34	25.3	9.3
	35-44	30.7	12.7
	45-54	25.5	13.7
	55-64	6.3	20.7
	65+	0.2	36.9
Educational attainment	0-8 Years	0.4	20.6
	Secondary	23.1	42.5
	Some post-secondary	7.7	16.5
	Post-secondary cert. or diploma	53.1	11.1
	University degree	15.6	6.1

Source: Client Database (1997-2001) & Health and Activity Limitation Survey (1991)

Table 3.2: Occupations most commonly occupied by women clients by disability (%)

Occupation	All women	Physical	Psychiatric	Cognitive/ Learning	Sensory
<i>Sales & Service Occupations</i>	23.4	29.6	21.4	31	13.8
<i>Retail Salespersons and Sales Clerks</i>	17.5	16.3	9.2	20.7	27.6
<i>Clerical Occupations</i>	10.5	10.7	11.2	13.8	6.9
<i>Occupations in Food and Beverage Services</i>	5.9	—	10.2	10.3	10.3
<i>Secretaries</i>	5.1	4.6	—	—	—
<i>Trades Helpers, Construction, Transportation Labourers</i>	—	5.1	8.2	—	—
<i>Assisting Occupations in Support of Health Services</i>	—	—	—	6.9	—
<i>Machine Operators in Manufacturing</i>	—	—	—	—	6.9

Table II (cont.): Occupations most commonly occupied by men clients by disability (%)

Occupation	All men	Physical	Psychiatric	Cognitive/ Learning	Sensory
<i>Sales & Service Occupations</i>	25.6	25.3	24.1	28.6	35.8
<i>Trades Helpers, Construction, Transportation Labourers</i>	22.3	21.3	22.8	26.8	22.6
<i>Retail Salespersons and Sales Clerks</i>	7.8	8.6	10.1	5.4	—
<i>Occupations in Protective Services</i>	5.8	—	6.3	5.4	—

<i>Occupations in Food and Beverage Services</i>	4.3	—	—	5.4	3.8
<i>Clerical Occupations</i>	—	5.7	3.8	—	5.7
<i>Transportation Equipment Operators & Related</i>	—	5.7	—	—	—
<i>Paralegals, Social Services workers</i>	—	—	—	—	3.8
<hr/> Source: Client Database (1997-2001)					

Table 3.3: Mean Hours and wages, and percentage of jobs full-time by gender and disability

		Hours per week	Wages per hour (\$)	Percentage jobs full-time
Ontario employees	Male	38.5	\$19.41	89.8
	Female	33.2	\$15.61	75.0
	Total	36.0	\$17.58	82.7
All clients	Male	33.4	\$9.29	74.6
	Female	28.2	\$8.59	52.2
	Total	30.9	\$8.94	63.8
<i>Physical</i>	Male	34.2	\$9.83	75.9
	Female	27.5	\$8.78	51.6
<i>Psychiatric</i>	Male	31.7	\$8.67	71.9
	Female	27.9	\$8.73	52.1
<i>Sensory</i>	Male	35.4	\$9.74	82.6
	Female	25.6	\$8.65	42.9
<i>Cognitive/Learning</i>	Male	33.3	\$8.90	77.6
	Female	28.4	\$7.86	50.0

Source: Client Database (1997-2001) & Labour Force Survey (2001)

Qualitative Research

Following the quantitative analysis, a sample of disabled people who had used the agency's services and a sample of regional employers were interviewed to

provide further insight into the experiences of disabled workers in the Hamilton context. The use of qualitative methods – specifically semi-structured in-depth interviews – appeared appropriate here since they permit researchers to capture the complexity of people's everyday routines as well as the subjective meanings people attached to social circumstances (Patton 1990). Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions also allow for responses that are unexpected, and may describe people's views and feelings more closely than fixed response categories (Fowler 1993). Through in-depth examination of individuals' experiences, qualitative methods allow for an examination of ways in which multiple factors intersect in and shape particular social contexts (Hoggart et al 2002). Finally, qualitative methods can provide insight into the *agency* of marginalized people as they respond to opportunities and challenges in daily life (Boydell et al 1999).

Recruitment of Participants

Employees were selected by means of systematic sampling from the non-profit agency's database of clients. Equal numbers of women and men with a diversity of physical, sensory, psychiatric and cognitive/learning impairments were recruited to explore similarities and differences among and between people with different conditions. Respondents provided input on a variety of topics, including the nature of the work, their relationships with employers and co-workers, and the process of negotiating disclosure and accommodation in the workplace.

Interviews typically took place at people's homes and lasted on average 90 minutes. Interviews were taped and transcribed in full. Overall, sixty-two interviews were conducted. For the purposes of this thesis, only data from women with experience in service sector employment are used (N = 20).

Recruitment for employer interviews occurred in two stages. Using data from the earlier stages of the research, approximately fifty companies were identified as having employed one or more of the agency clients. Next, fifty additional companies that mirrored the sector and size composition of the first group were selected from the Hamilton business directory to avoid concerns that companies identified from the agency were qualitatively distinct from other employers in the Hamilton region. Reflecting the work experience of agency clients, employers were concentrated in sectors including retail sales, service occupations such as custodial work and home care, food service work, clerical and administrative occupations, manufacturing, semi-skilled and unskilled labour. For-profit, private sector organizations constituted the majority of employers, but public & non-profit organizations were also represented. Organizations were contacted in writing and by telephone, with a request to speak with an individual involved in the hiring of new employees. Depending on the size of the employer, this varied from the owners of small businesses to Human Resource/Personnel staff of large employers. These individuals were asked to participate in a one-hour interview. Fifty interviews were completed.

The employer interview guide comprised two main sections. In the first, respondents were asked to describe the nature of, and any recent changes to, the organization and its workforce. They were then asked about the organization's hiring process, the types of openings they were hiring for, and the (formal and informal) criteria they used to determine what made a good job candidate. The second section focused on respondents' perceptions and/or experiences of hiring and managing workers with disabilities, as well as their knowledge of provincial regulations governing workplace accommodation. Interviews were tape-recorded, and were transcribed verbatim once data collection was completed. For this thesis, only employers in the service sector were included for the purposes of analysis (N=24)

3.3 Analysis

The data collected from the interviews was extensive and extremely detailed because of the nature of the research tool. For organizational purposes, the data was sorted in two separate sections. Because of the large volume of data, it was decided to sort the data by employee interviews and employer interviews and then once the separate analysis was complete, bring the two sections together for the discussion.

Following transcription, employee interviews were read repeatedly and then entered into the qualitative coding software, NUD-IST. During analysis, particular attention was focused on the nature of the labour process, the socio-

cultural and physical work environments, and whether accommodations had been asked for and/or received. A number of themes characterized clients' views on employer demands and work experience. These were organized under three broad headings. The first focuses on the women's views of employers' expectations with regard to service work. The second concerns the experiences of women at work, both in terms of the employment relation and the nature of the labour process. The third focuses on the extent to which women approached the issues of accommodation.

For employer data, interviews were similarly read and then entered into NUD-IST for analysis. One of the principal areas of interest in the analysis concerned the ways in which employers conceptualized disabled workers in the context of specific labour process/workplace configurations and how these conceptualizations in turn led them to different judgments about the employability of disabled persons. Analysis produced five broad themes that encapsulated respondents' discourse about disabled workers. These themes were not mutually exclusive, with individual respondents often using two or more in the course of the interviews. These themes are significant because the ways in which employers construct disability shape their willingness to hire and accommodate disabled workers.

CHAPTER 4

DISABLED WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE ON SERVICE WORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on disabled women's perceptions of, and experiences in, service sector workplaces. The chapter is organized into three main sections. The first looks at the women's experiences in the workforce with regard to the issue of employment relations in different service occupations. Within employment relations, attention is given to issues of flexibility/non-standard work and employer expectations with regard to training, and how these impact on the disabled women. The second section is concerned with the women's experience of work in terms of the labour process itself. Here, specific attention is given to the performance of service work, including the women's experience of emotional and embodied labour, the pace of work, multi-tasking and teamwork. The third section focuses attention on accommodations in the workplace, although to some extent this issue is present throughout the chapter.

Throughout the chapter, attention is given to the ways in which the women respond to employer demands, both in terms of their efforts to approximate and/or challenge the construction of the 'ideal worker'. Some of these strategies include decisions on whether to disclose or not-disclose a disability, whether to pursue requests for accommodation or not, and strategies to make do in non-

accommodating workplaces. Where possible, attention is also given to the similarities and differences in the experiences of women with different disabilities.

4.2 Women's experiences: Employment Relations

Organizations create an environment for work that reflects the culture of larger society, and the work cultures are largely based on dominant ideas and relationships of the societies that these institutions represent (Harlan and Robert 1998, also Gleeson, 1999) From industrialization onward, work organizations have been based on assumptions about the norm of 'able-bodiedness' excluding those who are perceived as 'not able' (Harlan and Robert 1998). This has many implications for disabled women attempting to enter the workforce, as assumptions about disability intersect with gendered nature of work in many institutions. Not only is the physical environment a barrier which prevents many disabled workers from joining the workforce, the negative affects of the social environment can be potentially more exclusionary for people with disabilities.

Flexibility For Whom?

As was suggested in chapter 2, recent decades have seen a shift in the nature of work, where the postwar ideal – permanent full time employment is becoming more difficult for workers to obtain. Replacing such positions in the workforce are more fluid, flexible work opportunities, with the growth of part-time work and the expectation that workers are available to work a variety of shifts at unsocial

hours. Because of the increasingly competitive, global market, employers attempt to maximize recruitment of employees to ensure worker retention, motivation and flexibility (Johnson 2004). The shift to non-standard forms of employment comes from the restructuring of the workplace in order to maximize profits. Roulstone (2002) argues that these changes have often not benefited the growing number of people being forced into lower paid work. As was also suggested earlier, employment in the service industry is also gendered, with a disproportionate number of women working in low-end service sector employment (Reiter 1996). The entry of more women into employment helped to make possible the expansion of the service industry, where service work such as restaurant staff and retail workers must work what most people would regard as unsocial hours because of extended retail business hours in the evenings as well as on weekends. The pressures of this work, coupled with the double workday faced by many women workers – tasks of social reproduction and paid employment – may be further complicated for the women in this study as they attempt to manage their disability.

There are two primary forms of flexibility in contemporary work: Numerical flexibility – where different work patterns (part-time, casual etc) are used in order to satisfy the demand for labour, while adaptive flexibility is where workers are forced to switch between tasks and adapt to new processes and products (Perrons, 2000: 1720). The primary focus here is the issue of numerical flexibility (adaptive flexibility will be dealt with in Section 4.3)

While there has been some suggestion that flexible employment relations may be beneficial for disabled people in terms of their ability to work part-time or to take up short-term contracts, other scholarship suggests that flexible work primarily benefits employers, more so than workers (Smith 1998). The concept of numeric flexibility is primarily used to the employers advantage, hiring more part-time and casual workers so that employers can hire and fire workers in response to the changing demands for goods and services, and where their flexible commitments to workers means that they often do not have to provide holiday pay, sick time and other benefits to workers. This type of employer flexibility can be contrasted with an ideal of a 'flexible workplace' that may provide opportunities for people to work while also dealing with the specific characteristics of their disability. For example, some workers with disabilities have increased medical appointments, which may require time off from work or a modified schedule. Also, in some instances, if the worker is not feeling well, they may require time off with relatively short notice. Without employers willing to be flexible with their scheduling, this could make it very difficult for disabled workers to continue working. For example, Michelle who has a mobility impairment and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) talked about the problems she faced working at a video store:

I told the people at the video store about this and they kind of looked at you like, "ya okay, whatever." And even my Managers, I mean, they used to kind of make jokes about it and say: "Oh, well are you planning on being sick today, ha ha ha"... I ended up quitting that job eventually because that was what I got every time I went in there: Are you planning on being sick today? And it was, I think about it, the stress made it worse. As soon as I

set foot in the door, I'd feel like: "Oh God my stomach better not hurt today because if it does, they're gonna look at me like I'm crazy and I'm making it up"

This quote is interesting both because it shows how the lack of worker flexibility made it difficult for Michelle to cope with her disability and because it suggests that the social environment at the workplace – the comments from managers – may have made it more difficult to cope with the IBS. Where flexibility was not forthcoming, some women talked about having to cover up the reason for their time off. Audrey, who was dealing with chronic depression and fibromyalgia, talked about her experience at a previous job:

My explanations for not being at work or having been away from work for periods of time were, um, there was personal problems with the family, or I was having somebody that was sick – I wouldn't tell them that it was me, I would just say, you know, somebody was sick. So, you know, and stuff like that and they expect that from a woman. You know, they expect you to be a care-giver of some kind.

This example is interesting because Audrey uses the expectation of women's responsibility for childcare to explain her absence. While this allowed her to avoid disclosing specific details about her disability, it did not necessarily avoid her being labelled as an 'inflexible' worker (Perrons 2002).

A related problem that surfaced during the interviews was the women's concern about employer assumptions about disabled workers and time off. Women with visible disabilities often felt that they were discriminated against before they were even hired because of their disability; and the perception that the disabled worker would need more time off. Sarah, who has rheumatoid

arthritis and has also had a knee replacement, explains why she thinks employers won't hire disabled workers:

They look for people that are going to be reliable. That are going to be there every day, you know, are going to do their job and more. And I think that along with the disability, they feel that you're not going to be able to perform. You're not going to be able to meet their criteria... So I really did feel that that was the barrier. Employers are concerned, you know you can't blame them, they're concerned about how much time is someone gonna take off.

Sarah is clear that her disability does play a role in why she has not been hired in the past, particularly with regard to employers' assumptions about the amount of time she may need off. Some of the disabled women interviewed begin to internalize the social norms and start to believe that they are really not suited for employment. Some also justify the rejection by employers by agreeing with what employers are saying, and by putting themselves in the position of the employer. As Sarah says, *'you can't blame them.'* This issue also illustrated the differences between visible and invisible disabilities with regard to flexibility. The women with visible disabilities like Sarah felt that there was more of a barrier when it came to initially being hired, whereas those with invisible disabilities did not face such a barrier. However, once hired, the women with invisible disabilities struggled to keep up with employer demands with regard to flexibility.

Along with scheduling, some of the women interviewed needed some flexibility while at work. Because of their disabilities, the women interviewed needed some flexibility with regard to certain everyday tasks, which they were unable to perform. Emily has a physical impairment as a result of an accident

that occurred while nursing and was reassigned to a service/clerical position within the hospital where she worked. She explained that her disability required her to have to move every once in a while, but this was sometimes made difficult by her supervisor:

Well, in some cases, I know that my previous boss. She was quite um, how shall I say, she was helpful and then she wasn't helpful. For instance, if sometimes I would say I'd have to leave or I need to get up and go have a break just because, get up and go because I have to move. I told my co-workers and they're fine with it. She was always just that you know you were made to feel that, you know, you can't.

This is an interesting example because of the fact that Emily was reassigned to this position as a result of an injury at work. Her union worked to ensure that she was provided with a job that she was physically able to do. At the same time, expectations about the performance of this job conveyed by her supervisor made it difficult for her to stay at the job. This type of employer demand and lack of flexibility makes maintaining employment difficult for some of the women interviewed. This can create stress for the disabled workers because they could be physically hurting themselves, but because they are afraid of losing their jobs, they will continue to work and endure the physical pain in order to keep their jobs. Little things at work sometimes make a big difference for disabled workers, and quite often the little differences allowed the women interviewed to keep their jobs. Again, this puts women in a bind, as they need to work. However they could be doing more damage to themselves in order to maintain employment.

The above examples are primarily from entry-level service jobs, where workers typically have fewer options as they have less control over their work.

While respondents in lower-paying, low-level service jobs were given much less flexibility, there were some women who had more positive experiences. For example, a small number of women in higher skilled positions were able to ask for and receive more control over their schedules. At the time of the interview, Sarah was working as an administrator for a non-profit organization. Asked about the issue of time off, she replied:

I don't see you know any problems with... they know I have rheumatoid arthritis. I don't take too much time off but occasionally I may phone in and say, "You know, I'm not moving very well today", and they're understanding in that respect.

Several other examples came from women who were working in jobs that involved some level of technological training for computing and web-based work. Wendy, who has an auditory disability that makes it difficult for her to process information, had worked for a non-profit organization collecting images for a website:

I think the best job I had was the web-designing job. It was very flexible – as long as the work got done. So I could work at the studio or I could work at home because as a photographer I'd have to go outside all day. So I would go outside and I shot anything and everything in Hamilton. We wanted a catalogue of pictures of people, cars, buildings, festivals, anything. So I just shot. I shot like 500 pictures a week. I just liked it because I didn't get nervous so much with an employee and a boss always watching you and stuff like that.

Similarly, Liz who has numerous impairments including a mobility impairment and irritable bowel syndrome discusses what she liked about her job working for a non-profit organization:

I was in charge of the content of the website and ah, I could go out and do some research and do some writing and I also did the marketing half of it,

so you know. I could be out and about but then I could also be sitting down. And I could be at the computer and then I could, you know, get up and leave early if I wanted to, if my stomach was upset because I could just work from home, because it was a computer.

At the time of the interview, Audrey, who has fibromyalgia and depression, worked from home as a customer service rep for a small trucking company.

Working from home, coupled with a flexible schedule, meant that the job worked well with regard to her disability and other health-related issues:

Friday afternoon I had to go for my annual mammogram and so... I'm taking off at, like, 12:30 and won't be probably back until 3:00... I offered to work the morning shift and he said, "No". He said, "Because I want to get out of here earlier on Friday." And I said "Well, I can't guarantee how early I'll be because of this appointment." He says, "That's okay. As long as I know you're going to come back and then finish up anything on the phone messages." I said "Fine". But we've got a big 'give and take' relationship, you know?

These experiences of 'flexibility' are quite different from those described by other women above. Liz and Wendy's experiences resemble the positive image of the IT/'new economy' jobs on which some of the more positive interpretations of recent restructuring have been based. These types of jobs have been created through increased use of information and communication technologies, creating more flexible patterns of work (Perrons, 2002: p.271). The flexibility given to them allowed the disabled women to continue working, as their employers gave them alternatives for when they were unable to meet the schedule due to their disability. This allows the disabled women to be able to maintain their employment, where in some cases without the flexibility, they would not be physically or mentally able to remain employed. Flexibility – as a form of

accommodation – removes considerable work-related pressure from disabled workers.

However, it is important to note that the jobs described by Liz and Wendy were both based in the non-profit sector, and both were temporary placements, while one was specifically created for someone with a disability. This means that they are not typical of jobs found in the for-profit sector, where employer demands for flexibility and profit maximization may be more intense. The fact that both were short-term contracts is also unfortunate since both women enjoyed the flexibility they provided. Audrey, while working in the for-profit sector, had secured her job through a placement agency, who had identified her employer as someone willing to accommodate. Her experience, while providing an example of what is possible, is also not typical. Employers' willingness to accommodate – by providing these types of positions – creates more opportunities to workers who previously may not have been able to compete in the paid workforce. These examples point to the ways in which the employer/worker relationships could change if flexibility became something that was given to both parties. Although these positive examples show what a good working relationship could achieve, the majority of the women commented that numeric flexibility was there for the benefit of the employers.

Problems with training

Training for employees is a related problem of flexibility in the sense that little training for workers facilitates the ease of transition for employers. Throughout the interviews it became clear that there is a definite link between flexibility and training. With the increase of lower-level service sector jobs, many employers are looking to hire workers who are 'ready to go', people who are able to jump into the job without training. Significantly, a recent study found that workers with disabilities were less likely than those without disabilities to have had training of any type (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004). The study also concluded that 7.3% of the sample population reported that they were refused training by employers because of their disability.

In the context of interviews, women talked about employers' expectations that their new employees would be trained and ready to perform as quickly as possible. Some respondents suggested that employers expected instant readiness with no training, while others emphasized personality over formal training (meaning if they have the personality they can be trained – this relates to the issue of emotional labour below). With that said, many of the women interviewed expressed their concerns about the training process at work. For women with disabilities, especially those with learning or psychiatric disabilities this can be a tough standard to meet, as they may require some extra time training. The lack of flexibility with regard to training can also be a source of

stress for many of the disabled women entering the workforce. Caitlin, for

example, discusses the experience of training at a discount department store:

I found a job at a [discount department store] as a cashier. So, anyway, the people in charge of the cashier department there, they didn't really train me too well. They just kind of gave me a few basic things. They didn't take you off the floor and tell you everything from A-Z. It was just: oh, do this, do that. I'm on the floor right away – on the busiest day. They expected me to be just as good as they were. When I asked questions I practically got yelled at.... Even though I was new. They didn't want me asking questions. Well, how are you going to learn the right way if you don't ask a question?

Similarly, Wendy, who has an auditory disability that makes it difficult for her to process information, explained what happened when she was training as a cashier:

Most of it was just I was upset because of the cash. Nobody stopped to explain the cash to me and it was just overwhelming. I would probably just leave because of that. It was just stuff that they were showing me that I couldn't do and a lot of it was – they would probably think that I wasn't working out for the job so they would lay me off.

These quotes show how the women interviewed experienced the lack of training at their work. They also suggest that the women recognize the risk of being labelled a bad worker because they are unable to pick up the necessary skills in the time allotted. Clearly the lack of training affected them in a negative way.

Related to training, some women spoke strongly about the need for employers to recognize that not all workers are the same, whether this is because of disability or not. This could be looked at as another form of flexibility in the sense that it recognizes that workers will negotiate their disability and work differently. Jenny, who has been diagnosed with epilepsy and says that she is a

slow learner, stated that she would like employers to realize that disabled workers are different, and need to be treated differently in comparison to able-bodied workers:

They seem to try and treat them all the time like a normal person and that doesn't work with everybody. They get upset faster. They are more sensitive than some other people are. If they don't do the job well, instead of putting them down, keep showing them how to do it right. and if they can't do it, don't get mad at them. Put them somewhere else; find them something else that they can do. They get frustrated at them because they can't do it. It's not their fault. You know. Yelling and screaming at somebody just doesn't do it for me.

For many of the women interviewed with psychiatric and learning disabilities, problems arose because they were not able to perform the required duties of a particular job without some additional training or assistance along the way.

Statements like Jenny's show the real concerns the women have about employers' demands. Their experiences suggest that while there are some positive outcomes, there seems to be a need for the employers to be more sensitive to the needs and also the capacities of women with disabilities, and an attempt to negotiate a workable schedule for the women that also fits the needs of the employers. This may be easier said than done however, since it challenges the prevailing shift toward greater flexibility for employers.

4.3 Women's experiences: The Labour Process

The women interviewed for this study often had a good sense of what they thought were the qualities employers were looking for in ideal employees. They also recognized that there was a tension between what employers wanted and

what they, as disabled women, were able to give as employees. In the context of interviews, the women talked about their experiences at work, and the ways in which aspects of the labour process made this tension apparent. Their statements are organized here under three sub-headings that reflect the themes that emerged from interviews: (1) emotional and embodied performance; (2) speed of work; and (3) multi-tasking and teamwork. Throughout, there is a sense that the women often confront a difficult, and sometimes impossible, choice between attempting to approximate the employer's ideal but risking emotional and physical costs or doing the work as best they can but risking the loss of employment.

Emotional and Embodied Performance

As previously stated the service sector often requires a great deal of emotional performance from its workers. Seymour (2000) argued that the way potential employees represent the company (and the company's products) can be more important than the skills that the worker possesses. Gender is also an issue within the service sector, as it is disproportionately women holding service sector employment. There is an emphasis placed on performance in the service sector, which Hochschild (1983) argues can be emotionally and physically draining for any worker. Thinking about disabled workers, the performance aspect can be doubly draining, because not only are the disabled workers attempting to perform as required by the employer, they must also attempt to manage their disability.

Again, the performance aspect of service work will affect the women differently with regard to the type of disability. Some service sector positions would cause certain responses from women with different disabilities

Women with psychiatric and learning disabilities, for example, may have problems providing 'appropriate' emotional performances at work. Although women are often aware of what is expected from their performance, sometimes they cannot comply. Some workers explained that they felt they did not "fit in" and/or were anxious in social interactions at work. This has many implications because of the nature of service sector work, where work often revolves around interaction with customers, co-workers and supervisors. Helen, for example, had chronic depression and had worked in food service as a waitress. She described the pressure she felt from her manager to provide the right kind of emotional performance:

Because I felt really – overwhelming ... but, at times I felt like he was just like, watching me. Like, not... I don't know how to word it, he was just watching me when I was working. I don't know. The way that I was talking to customers and stuff like that I guess. I don't know, but that was my feeling about it.

Similarly, Karen who also had chronic depression discussed her experiences in a food service job that she had recently left:

Employers, of course, they want to see your attitude and they want to see how you come across like communication and your level of confidence. It's just not there. I can pretend to be confident. I get really, I get good days and I get bad days and some days I'm just like "rrrrrr". So, in the service industry it seems like most of the jobs, like these are just assumptions... you're a person who a great attitude all the time. Some people are less patient than others. I'm not a very good candidate for those kinds of jobs.

Like Helen, she also found that her manager was attentive to the kind of emotional labour she was performing at work, and would remind her when things were not done properly:

The one job every few days the guy was saying “smile” I would realize it. “Oh yeah sorry”. He was always saying, “Why don’t you ever smile, and you’re pretty and young you’ve got the whole world ahead of you, you should be happy”.

The women are aware of the emotional performance that is required by the employers; however they realize that they are often unable to fulfill the performance requirements. The women must negotiate within themselves a way to perform adequately, for fear of losing work. Although both women recognize that they may not be ideal candidates for service work, they both also worry that this is the only type of work open to them.

In other settings, women noted problems in dealing appropriately with co-workers. Kate, who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, explained that she struggled on a daily basis both with customer relations and in dealing with colleagues:

Well, it’s a struggle, it’s just always a struggle. I have to pace myself more and I have to make adjustments and when I’m feeling good, try to get more done and just dealing with others around me when I’m feeling irritable or I’m down or something like that, it’s hard. I don’t feel like I blend in as well, you know, the lunchroom or anything.

These situations can be difficult not least because the interactions are draining, and Kate struggled to provide an appropriate and consistent emotional performance. At the same time, her concerns that she couldn’t always do this led

her to avoid interactions, sometimes spending time in the bathroom to get away. As a result, she felt somewhat marginalized at work.

Although women with psychiatric and learning disabilities were more likely to describe issues with emotional labour, it was also a concern for women who had physical disabilities. For example, women coping with chronic pain from an injury or from a condition like arthritis or fibromyalgia might also find it difficult to sustain appropriate emotional performances for customers and co-workers when they are tired and irritable as a result of the pain.

Although Hoschild and others have offered extensive discussion of emotional labour, this discussion has not been connected to the issue of bodily performance, which plays an important part in many service sector jobs. Bodily performance is a part of 'aesthetic labour' in the sense that how the worker looks and carries her/himself communicates something about the service that is being provided. Emotional and aesthetic forms of labour are related, in the sense that both are used by workers in the interests of making a sale or satisfying a client's demands, and also to portray a particular kind of corporate image.

Many of the disabled workers interviewed were aware of the importance of appearance in the service sector. Some women with visible disabilities were conscious that they did not necessarily fit into embodied image that companies were looking for. Angela, who has a form of arthritis, comments on how she looks compared to what she believes employers want her to look like:

It's the physical thing. A lot of people with disabilities look different. Like it's affected my face, my hands and some people it affects their speech. It

actually has affected my speech a bit, but not obviously. Um, I think that's part of the discrimination. They want people to look young and healthy... quick and vibrant and they forget about the other deeper values.

For other women with disabilities that were less visible, a strategy was to try to approximate how they think employers expect them to physically appear. Many women noted the importance of appearance. Karen, who has clinical depression, discussed what she believes is expected from employers:

Oh, okay. The clothes you have, some places they expect you to look nice. Not just at an interview, but when you start working... like if you work in a bar or something, like you, you got to look stylish.

While the issue of appropriate appearance is one that confronts all women in these types of occupations, women with disabilities – even if they do not look visibly 'different' – may still confront additional challenges. Liz, who has chronic back pain and irritable bowel syndrome, describes the dress code and what we might think of as the 'bodywork' required at a retail store where she had been employed:

It's kind of like a high-class body shop place... you have to be kind of dressy. You have to have like the skirts on and you know high-class sort of appearance. So especially in there, you couldn't be sitting down on stools. Ha ha ha. I mean, you were in heels. You know, I was in kind of low-slung heels. Pumps or something, but even that was kind of getting to my back. Like you couldn't get away with wearing ah, sometimes I'd get away with wearing penny loafers in there but no. It would, it would be frowned upon. Ah, you always had to have the image of always looking active, you always had to be going up to people, you always had to be straightening things, walking around, looking like you were doing something... You know, you can't be doing anything, where it looks like you're not up to your optimum customer service, happy smiley personality. You always have to be on the go.

The experience recounted here suggests that in this workplace the issue of bodily appearance and conduct are central to what makes an ideal worker. The dress code is one part of this. For Liz, the requirement to wear high heels at work was difficult because it exacerbated her back pain. She responded to this by attempting to get away with loafers although she suggests this may have been 'frowned upon' by her manager. In addition to the dress code, the expectation of constant motion and no sitting also have obvious implications for people with physical disabilities (and for non-disabled people as well). Last, Liz appears to link emotional labour and bodywork when she says that the constant motion and energy expected are tied to conveying the 'happy, smiley' personality of the worker. Service workers are not only required to 'act' a certain way, the way they carry themselves, through their acting comes across in their bodily performance as well. Simple things such as workers posture; the way they walk, and work are all part of the image and performance that is required by employers in the service sector. This links back to the work of McDowell (1997) on the 'disciplining' of workers in terms of their bodies in the interest of effectively performing service work and appropriately representing the products/services they are selling. Disabled workers identified many of the characteristics employers were looking for, but also explained how they could not approximate these characteristics. Interestingly, Liz articulated an alternative approach to work in the retail setting, when asked what would make this kind of job more manageable:

Flexibility almost. The ability to just you know take someone as a good worker and if they have a problem with their back, say - You know what, you're a great worker though and you're good with the people. And you've got great people skills, so if you know what, if you need a chair, here. If you need a stool, fine. Because it's not like I have to be sitting all the time. It's that I'd have the option to be able to take a breather. I could still be out front at a counter and sit down very nicely in a nice high stool even. Or a chair and just to be able to sit, but I would jump up if somebody came over.

Last, it should be noted that some women experienced less pressure for emotional and embodied labour at work. There is a difference within the service sector, especially between office administration jobs compared to customer service, or between retail work and cleaning work. The administration type jobs can be classified as more professional where as customer service is more of a social type of employment – where employees are expected to be more outgoing and friendly.

Speed

The issue of speed in the workplace was also important to the respondents. The very nature of capitalism revolves around maximizing profits and speed, obtaining as much labour from workers as possible. At the same time, changes to work in recent decades through economic restructuring have led to efforts to speed up work in some sectors, including low-wage service occupations. In the interviews, many of the women spoke about the challenges they faced in maintaining the required pace at numerous places of employment. Kathy, who is vision impaired

and working in an office environment, talks about how she struggled to keep up with the fast paced environment at her place of employment:

I was always afraid that I wouldn't be able to, to do any job. Like I just, um, especially with this new technology coming in to play. I'm not that, I'm not really a fast learner. Once I learn something though, I learn it good. But I'm not quick. And that, I find is like another disability really.

Caitlin, who has a learning disability and works in retail, explained her difficulties with keeping up at work. Like Kathy, she also tends to individualize the problem, suggesting that her problem is that she does not complete tasks as quickly as her employer would like:

I don't work fast. I am the kind of person – I don't work as fast as other people. I don't know why. I'm not – I have complete function in my body. It's not that I'm walking with crutches or have any – it's just that I don't work as fast as other people. And I don't learn as quick as other people, so it's sort of a hidden disability.

A third example comes from Cora, who has Spastic Cerebral Palsy. She had been hired to work as a counsellor at a summer camp for kids with disabilities. Although she had discussed her accommodation needs with the camp director, she still ran into problems with her supervisors over the issue of speed:

They had noticed that I, I would, they said that I was trying as hard as I could, they noticed the effort was there, but that I wasn't, I couldn't function fast or at the speed. Like they felt that I was kind of slowing down the, how fast everybody was going. And they needed to go fast.

These quotes illustrated the women's concerns about speed. What is significant here is that although the women's disabilities are different, they all recounted concerns related to speed. They commented that they are supposed to work at a certain pace, however they also stated that they couldn't go as fast as required.

Another issue related to speed concerns management's efforts to monitor workers' performance. As mentioned in the previous chapter, employers now have concrete methods of timing individuals while working – scans per minute, time limits for workers etc, because of the increase of technology in the workplace (Roulstone, 2002). The issue of timing people and introducing quotas can be stressful for any worker. For the women with disabilities, it can be seen as an added stress if they are physically unable to work at such a speed. Janice has a learning disability and worked for a cleaning contractor. She discussed how she was timed every day at work:

Well, they had to; you had to time everything you went like for example, we do a student's room, we'd have to be timed for that. You'd have to go in, look at your watch, okay, it's 9 o'clock, I gotta go in. This is an example. I got to go in do my thing in there and then get out and then I'd have to, we'd be timed. Say for example, it would be, maybe take you 10 minutes or something like that. Approximately like that. Then you had to time each room, and then you had to hand it in at the end of the shift. So, I, I even had a hard time out there trying to keep up and that's another thing.

Dawn, who has chronic depression and a learning disability, works for home care agency that supplies workers to nursing homes on a temporary basis. She explains how many residents at the home she was supposed to see per hour and how that time put a strain on the care she was supposed to give to each individual patient:

It was just totally unreal... it was like if you're an agency, because you were an agency [worker], they gave you ah, at first they would give you 7 residents on the floor to do, 7 or 8 residents and the actual caregivers that used, that are actually staff at this particular nursing home would get only 5 and they would actually tell you to hurry up, hurry up, it was like constantly, you know like you have to hurry up... I actually had one, I

actually had 2 or 3 care givers at this particular nursing home who actually who said to me - Dawn, don't even bother wiping off her butts if it's urine, just put on a clean diaper. I said, what do you mean just put on a clean diaper. I said, it smells, you have to clean it. I said you have to clean it with water, at least with water you wipe it off. I was told: "yes you are a very compassionate person, yes you are a very caring person, but you're just slow".

Both Janice and Dawn realized they had to perform quickly, but were also put under considerable pressure as they could not perform up to speed and felt as if their work suffered from the fast pace they were forced to keep. Also, the women demonstrate that the speed that they are required to perform at may be too fast, because they are unable to finish their tasks in the allotted periods of time, which is another source of stress for the women. They want to complete the tasks on time however they also want to do a good job, which is not possible with the given time constraints, so they are often forced to choose either quantity or quality of work. Dawn's comments are of particular significance because she worked for a contract agency. Other literature has suggested that these agencies bid for contracts by offering lower labour costs for the same amount of work (Cranford 2005). One way this is achieved is by speeding up the work for individual workers. Dawn's experience also demonstrates that the pressure for speed not only places stress on workers, but it also creates an issue for the quality of service received. This impacts the quality of work done by the workers, to the point where they may be required to skip some aspects of the job that they feel is important, but the employers decide that it is not.

A number of women attempted to keep up with the fast pace of their employment, but experienced considerable stress and anxiety as a result. Janice, who has a learning disability, described the experience of working for a cleaning company when they introduced a program of timing the work and random checks on performance:

You were scared, all the time and I can't work in, situations, and this it were I'm finding it hard that ah, to work in a situation where somebody's always on your back or ah, like you know, kinda always eyeing you. Watching what you're doing, that there, that bothers me a lot, you know?

Caitlin, who has a learning disability, talked about the pressure she experienced while working assembling gift baskets for a specialty grocery store:

I had this job at [NAME], the people where they make all the food. He had me in there for Christmas time making these gift baskets. I did it as fast as I could, you know. This lady showed me how to do it. We were doing it and then after – when I was doing it after about 2 weeks, he says to me: if you can do these things fast, why don't you? I was doing them as fast as I could. But you know what I mean? It is very frustrating... I mean, I can do a lot of things on my own. I raised a daughter on my own. I worked all those years as a sales person. But it's very difficult when you don't learn quickly and you don't work fast. There is always somebody better than you, today.

Caitlin's quote in particular gets at the way in which negative experiences at work can have a profound impact on people's sense of self. She contrasts her treatment at the grocery store with her accomplishments as a mother and her past work experience, but is resigned that expectations in the contemporary labour market put her at a disadvantage. Some employers will simply not keep workers who are slower than what they feel is appropriate for given tasks, regardless of whether they can actually complete the tasks if given additional

time. In some instances, women also experienced physical injury when attempting to keep up with the pace of work. For example, Janice fell while hurrying to clean a hotel room in the allotted 17 minutes. Worryingly, some women ended up staying behind and working unpaid overtime to complete specific work tasks. This was often the case for women who worked in cleaning service work and home care, where they would be paid for an allotted time period, but would have to stay to complete the work even if it took longer than this. Janice, who worked for a cleaning contractor, was being paid for five hours of work while actually working six. Clearly this is a form of exploitation, and Janice is not making a choice to work without getting paid. She is expected to finish a certain amount of work, and Janice continues to work these hours to finish her work, for fear of losing employment. Smith, 1998, states that the traditional secure employment contracts are declining, which have numerous workers fearful of losing employment. This can be seen as a control tactic for the employers, which is used to exploit workers, as they want to keep their jobs.

Multi-tasking and Teamwork

Multi-tasking – or ‘adaptive flexibility’ – was also seen as an issue for many of the women. As more and more employers are using multi-tasking to cut costs, workers are required to learn and work at many different tasks. Perrons, (2000) argues that adaptive flexibility increases the intensity of work, because workers are expected to be polyvalent, switching from task to task, allowing each worker

to substitute for another. Once workers were required to learn only one job, while now workers are expected to be interchangeable between departments. In retail environments, this can be challenging for people with a variety of disabilities if they are expected to everything from stocking, selling, assembling shelving units, cashing out, and other activities. For example, Kathy is vision impaired and here she discusses her concerns about multi-tasking where she works as an administrator:

If you think about it, cause a lot, and see a lot of things that used to be years ago, if you would get somebody that would just answer the telephone, or just do filing, or just do typing and that is something that I could have done, really well. Now the employers want me to do 5 or 6 things at one time. And I'm not fast enough for that. I'm not able to keep up with the work for speed. That's really a hard thing for me to do.

Tina, who is visually impaired, comments on the disjuncture between the many different tasks that can assigned to the 'normal' worker at a video store, and the difficulties she may encounter if she is asked to work at the cash register:

For me as an example, I wouldn't be able to do cash register because if I need to look at prices, or like I could probably see like the keys or the numbers or something on the cash register, but if I need to look at any prices then I would have to use my magnifying glass... They may not want that, cause it takes me longer. So then I could just maybe do like I said, stock shelves or something. So it would limit you, I don't know.

Similarly, Liz thinks about the potential for problems with adaptive flexibility in retail when she is applying for a job:

I really do look around and think could I work here? And then I look at how they have to get the hooks and reach up for the clothes and how there's no stools there and how they've got little low lying shelves, that they've got all the stuff pushed way back into. And, or, like at [discount department store] where they've got like, all the stuff stacked up on top. You'd have to get a ladder, now I think, there's no way I could work here. And I'm sure

that other people in my situation might be thinking the same thing. If they're walking around thinking, it's just not accessible.

This quote demonstrates how women such as Liz often have to pass up the opportunity to work in certain places because they cannot complete all of the required tasks. In a sense this can be a coping mechanism for the women because they have internalized the social norms that argue that the normal person should be able to accomplish all of the required tasks. By not even applying to certain jobs where the women would have to ask for accommodations, the women do not have to deal with a stressful work situation. As Wilton (2004) has noted, the move toward multi-tasking is particularly troubling for disabled people because it works against the intent of 'reasonable accommodation' legislation which asks employers to identify non-essential work tasks that can be reassigned to other workers. In fact, Kathy and Liz point to the ways in which the 'essential' tasks of specific jobs are expanding. Today's employers expect a great deal from their workers, and they expect them to be able to perform with little or no training. For the women interviewed, that can create problems, because as Kathy and Caitlin point out, they could use some help in order to perform the expanded essential duties. In such cases, a little extra help can be seen as an accommodation for these women, as they would not be able to meet the requirements of the job without some help.

A response on the part of some women to demands for multi-tasking is to be upfront about potential limitations to employers. This can meet with varying

responses. Vicky, who has a learning disability, comments on an experience after she was hired at a restaurant:

I told them right off the bat that I don't understand cash registers because I can't read them [cash registers]. So she says 'can you start on Saturday?' and I said: 'I got a job!' I go in on Saturday and she's showing me everything and she pointed out the cash register and she goes: "you know anything about cash?" I already told you I did not know about cash and she said: "we can't hire you because you've no training on cash".

Vicky's experience could be accounted for by the fact that some employers have a limited understanding of the limitations caused by a specific impairment.

Employers' knowledge of disabilities is addressed in more detail in the following chapter. Peggy, who has a hearing impairment and worked as a dental assistant and receptionist, talked about explaining to her boss about her impairment and the fact that she was not comfortable answering the telephone:

Phone work is different. I know they got the apparatus for the phone and everything like that, but I hear better, oddly to say, reading lips when people are present. Over the phone it is a totally different ball game. You can't see their lips; you can't see their facial expressions... I can *do* the phone. I can get on the phone, but I'm not comfortable with that because I don't want to bring in wrong information.

Although Peggy explained her concerns initially to her boss, she found that it was necessary to repeatedly remind him of the implications of her hearing impairment in the workplace. Church, & Luciani, (2005) have suggested that this is part of the 'extra' work that disabled people must often do in the workplace to sensitize others to their disabilities.

Expectations of multi-tasking are problematic for many women. For some, this produces a lack of confidence, as they know they are unable to compete

effectively with other non-disabled workers. Other women were frustrated because they are perfectly able to work at some aspects of the job, but because they are unable to do everything, they are not able to keep working. Once again, women with different disabilities react differently to each situation. Those with learning disabilities such as Caitlin and Vicky have trouble with the aspect of learning and remembering different tasks. On the other hand women with physical disabilities such as Liz and Kathy struggle with some of the more physical aspects of the job.

The concept of teamwork can be linked to multi-tasking because of the belief that workers in the service sector are interchangeable – every employee should be able to perform every task at work. The team aspect comes into play when workers and co-workers are left to divide, manage and accomplish a set number of tasks during a shift, without any specific responsibilities. Workers must use all of their skills acquired on the job, and may be required to shift from task to task while others are performing other duties. In addition, scholars have argued that teamwork is a tool used by management to control workers by encouraging employees to monitor the performance of their co-workers. This can be particularly effective when individual workers' performance is evaluated based on the overall performance of the team (e.g., Smith 1998; Smith 2001). In interviews, women recounted both good and bad experiences with regard to teamwork, which either helped or hindered them at work. On the negative side, a number of women talked about co-workers hassling them for not performing work

in an appropriate manner. Jenny has epilepsy and describes herself as slow learner. She explained her frustration with her co-workers' lack of trust in her performance at work:

It's really hard sometimes because people are not sensitive because people don't take my word for things. Like, if I say: I did that or I checked that and they (.) It's not my fault!!! Okay, fine! I made a mistake. I get upset when nobody believes that I've actually done this or whatever it is that I am supposed to do or whatever. And they don't believe I've done it. If I tell you I've done it or this is a problem, this is the truth. Why would I lie...

In this instance, where Jenny may have made an occasional mistake in the past, the quality of her work is now subject to doubt from co-workers. Other women had to confront quite abusive work environments. Vicky said that a co-worker in an earlier job had hit her. At her present job, she explained that it had been mainly verbal abuse:

It's happened at a [fast food restaurant] right now... well, no hitting, they'd never hit me. But they always call me stupid and stuff, I don't know what I'm doing, and I should just quit while I'm ahead...

Similarly, Wendy talked about the problems she faced everyday at work in a retail outlet:

I would come home and I'd cry and my mom would be like: okay, maybe tomorrow will be better; just hold on. She was always trying to get me to stay. And I would be so upset because they were mean to me...

While the experiences of Vicky and Wendy might be interpreted as instances of disability discrimination, they can also be thought of as examples of co-workers 'disciplining' the respondents for what they deem to be poor work performance. In this sense, teamwork can prove to a source of stress for some women. When

the disabled workers are treated differently than other workers and/or are not provided with appropriate assistance, they may find it difficult to remain in the job.

At same time, not all experiences were negative. Some experiences demonstrated the positive aspects of teamwork in terms of fostering solidarity among workers. For the disabled women, understanding among co-workers can help to counter the lack of accommodation from employers, making jobs easier to manage. Although Vicky's current job had proved to be particularly difficult, an early experience had been much more positive:

When I was at [name], I had two co-workers. Like I worked sometimes with them and they were always there for me when I started crying. They kept on making sure that it was okay with me. They were always there for me when I needed somebody to help me figure they were there with me.

Similarly, Janice had forged connections with other non-disabled workers at the condominium complex she was helping to clean. These connections were significant as the other women persuaded Janice that she should refuse to do unpaid overtime. She commented:

The condominium, there's teamwork out there. Everybody helps everybody. And I like that you know. We're about the same age too. So that helps a lot. I'm on my own, which I like. I don't like, I, to be on assembly line or to be on like in a kitchen.

These quotes show how when people work together, the disabled workers experiences in the workplaces are positive. Being accepted by their peers and getting help when needed allows the women to relax and focus on the work that is needed to be done.

Lastly, in some cases, women were willing to confront team members to explain their disabilities and the limitations these imposed. These confrontations were not always easy, but there were often necessary in situations where co-workers' initial reactions to the disabled woman was that she was not "pulling their weight" in the team. Sarah explains one encounter:

A co-worker, a few weeks ago, she wanted help up with some boxes and I said, you know, "Sorry I can't give you a hand with that." And she was quite shocked. And "What's wrong with you, why can't you," because I looked normal. I guess she wasn't aware. And the fact that she wasn't aware, she was ticked off with me that I wasn't going to offer and I said, "You should know me better than that, ...I would help you out if I could physically it's hard".

Peggy also had to confront co-workers on numerous occasions to explain how to communicate effectively with her.

If someone comes up to me and they start yakking to me and wanting me to do something and they are walking away from me, well, you might as well have said goodbye because I didn't hear a word. I know they have said something to me, but I don't know what it was. I have been in that situation a number of times and I've had to ask them to repeat it... It comes back to saying: stand there, ask me. You know? Don't walk away. Sometimes I think they think I'm making that as an excuse and it isn't the case.

4.4 Accommodations

For workers with disabilities, accommodations are often the only way for them to achieve and maintain paid work. For some workers, accommodations are necessary in order for them to participate in paid work. Accommodations are not meant to give the disabled worker an advantage over other workers. They should simply allow the disabled worker to perform at the same level as the other

employees. Many accommodations cost relatively little to provide. Although accommodations (and lack thereof) have been mentioned throughout the chapter, there is a need to address the topic of accommodations as a separate issue. This section focuses on some of the issues that arose in the context of the interviews regarding accommodation. Three specific issues are addressed. The first is the difficult decision women must make about whether to ask for accommodation or not. The second concerns the difficulty women sometimes face in getting things changed even once they have asked. Finally, the women reflect on some of the changes that they see as necessary to make employers more willing to provide accommodation. It should be noted here that the women's experiences demonstrate that there were differences in terms of the types of work and who is more likely to receive accommodations in the workplace. Thus, lower, entry-level workers were less likely to ask for or receive accommodations, while higher paid, skilled workers negotiated reasonable accommodations from their employers.

To ask or not to ask?

One issue that arose repeatedly was whether to ask for accommodation or not. Where impairment is visible and has a substantial impact on a person's functioning, the issue of accommodation is on the table from the outset. In other situations, this may not be the case. Women with some visible disabilities may still face the question of whether, and when, to request particular kinds of

accommodation. They may worry that asking for too much will jeopardize their chances of getting or keeping a job. Kathy, for example, had had problems in the past where she told prospective employers about the additional equipment she would need to accommodate her visual impairment.

The biggest thing is, as soon as I told them that I had equipment, they weren't interested. Um, I actually applied to a couple of real estate agents and um, and of course I have to be truthful. I can't lie to them. Hmm. And when they found out that I had this equipment, they didn't seem to be very interested because now I was sort of like um, not an asset to their company.

Women who have non-visible disabilities are faced with the question of whether or not to disclose their disability in order to request a particular accommodation. If they conceal their disabilities, they may stand a better chance of being hired, but they cannot ask for accommodations. Opinions varied here. Elaine, for example, commented that:

It's good to get the hearing thing out of the way. Like, I like to tell them about it and all the rest – ask them if that's a problem for them and all that. So if you can get that out of the way, you can kind of see what kind of reaction you get.

For her and others, not disclosing and discussing the disability meant that things were likely to be more difficult later on. Problems might include difficulties completing work tasks, as well as the physical and or mental discomfort associated with a lack of accommodation. For Kate, on the other hand, disclosing was simply not an option. She said:

I'm positive I wouldn't, well, because every time I shared it, I've been fired, so, they just, you know, if there's two people that it's close between and they hear that one of them has a problem, then they're going to hire the other one, every time... They're going to judge you and you feel that

they're going to watch me with different eyes, you know? Just be looking for my downfalls and my mood swings and I feel like I'm under a microscope, you know, some kind of experiment or something they need to watch.

This statement is significant in that it points to the fact that employers and co-workers may be less comfortable dealing with psychiatric disabilities than with, for example, mobility impairments in the workplace (see Wahl 1999). The persistence of stigma relating to mental illness, as well as a lack of understanding about the kinds of accommodation people may require may help to explain Kate's experiences. Other women with psychiatric disabilities were also reluctant to disclose. Kate went on to talk about the kinds of accommodation she could use, and the problems that arose without them:

Just to be able to, like, have an extension on a work project or not as much all at once, like, if they'd understand that, you know, I will get to it or that I'm doing my best, then sometimes I do better, but, of course it can never be adjusted in the corporate world. There's deadlines and that's all there is to it. You've got to have it done by the deadline [How does that affect you?] Pressure, just bad, so much pressure to perform when you're not up to it.

Getting things done

A second theme concerned the challenges of actually getting an accommodation once it had been requested. In some instances, this was because there was because there was an institutional inertia and/or a reluctance to expend resources. Emily explained the problems she ran into once she was reassigned as a receptionist following an injury as a nurse. Although an assessment was

done of her workspace for accommodation, few of the changes were implemented:

Well, it was too much money, everybody was going through a crunch at that point in time, you know. Now, there's supposed to be now funds for ergonomical things to be done to an area, if a person has a disability and it comes out of a totally different fund... The girl that did my assessment of my area um, she couldn't believe that I was still in the same position that I was. She said: well I put all these things through. I said: well I know that. I've gone to management too and obviously... We get to a point where you just you know.

This quote is troubling in the sense that Emily worked in a large, unionized workplace, a setting where obtaining accommodation is probably more straightforward than in smaller, non-union setting. However, there was a disjuncture between what was supposed to happen and what occurred in practice. While legislation requires employers to accommodate to the point of 'undue hardship', enforcing this in practice can be difficult, particularly where the responsibility for enforcement falls to the individual herself.

In other instances, there was reluctance to introduce accommodations due to concerns that it would somehow disrupt the work environment. Kathy, who needed a screen reader to magnify documents at her desk, described the reactions of her supervisors when she approached them about accommodation:

I mean they weren't thrilled... I found that maybe the people, the other girls working at the same desk that I was during the day. Um, at first they were a little reluctant, but to be honest with you, afterwards, if they had a problem reading something themselves, they would actually use my equipment. So, it became a joke after. Yeah. But um, like I said, I was already working for them so they knew me. And so it's easier for people – okay in my opinion and my thoughts, it's easier for a company to accept a person with a disability if they're already working for the company.

Kathy's experience raises a couple of important issues. The first is that despite initial concerns about the accommodation it made little difference to the operation of the workplace. Non-disabled people's lack of understanding about the nature and extent of different accommodations may account in part for employers' reluctance. Second, Kathy recognizes that her employers willingness – albeit reluctant – to accept the accommodation may have been due in part to the fact that she was already an employee. Someone applying for a job may have had a more difficult time convincing the company.

Last, people's experiences also point to the importance of agency on the part of the women in terms of making accommodations happen. This can take the form of carefully explaining or repeatedly lobbying for change – which can be daunting. It can also take the form of locating resources in the community that will provide the necessary equipment or service. Wendy talked about finding a job coach from an agency in Burlington to help her with a new job.

What's going on now because I am categorizing photographs, I have to size them and I don't understand it. Because I knew that I'd have problems with work I found an organization that will have a person that will come for a couple of hours and talk to the employer and then explain it to me so that I don't get so overwhelmed and lost in certain things. So when I get confused with stuff then I will phone her and say: okay, he is showing me something about the debit machine or something on the computer; I don't understand it; he explained it to me once and I don't understand it. He will explain it to you then you sit down and try and drill it into my head somehow. Or she will write it down and then I can follow it.

This type of organizing can also be considered another form of extra work that disabled people have to do in order to find and keep paid employment (see Church & Luciani 2005). While many of the women recognize their responsibility

to seek out help, employers should also ideally be knowledgeable about the options for workers with disabilities.

For many of the women interviewed, the bottom line is that disabled workers at some point will need some help or accommodations from their employers in order to gain and maintain paid work. More than that, in order for disabled workers to remain productive, employers may need to make minor adjustments in the workplace from time to time. Yet many of the women were not optimistic that employers would be willing to make these kinds of adjustments, and many of them had been let go from jobs or experienced disadvantage at work as a result of a lack of accommodations.

What should be done?

A third theme focused on the women's opinions about changes that could be made to improve access to accommodations, and employers' willingness to hire disabled people. Many of their statements focused on the attitudes of employers with regard to disabled people as potential employees. Sarah explained why she believes employers are reluctant to hiring people who need to be accommodated:

Attitudes. I think they just think that if they bring in someone that has a disability it is going to be more work. Or it's going to cost them financially, in one way or the other. Whether it's assistive devices or whether it's making accommodations in the work environment or whether it's – oh this person's going to have a lot of time off so we're going to have to pay a lot out in you know, sick time and that kind of thing. I think it, instead of listening to the person and maybe looking at even their work history.

Elaine explained that there was some variation among employers. While some were willing to consider disabled people, others simply did not recognize the assets people could bring to their organization.

If they don't hire you, they don't want anything to do with that, you know. There are enough people looking for jobs that they probably figure: why not just get an able-bodied person? Because they are out there. Rather than thinking what other assets does this disabled might have that would help better.

Her statement is interesting because it highlights the sense that disabled people ultimately are competing with non-disabled people for jobs, and employers may simply feel more comfortable hiring the latter. This gets at the persistence of the 'able-body' as an implicit norm in the work culture of many organizations. And where routines, practices and the everyday operation of companies are based around this norm, hiring disabled people may seem daunting to employers. Because of this some of the disabled women feel that they are not given a fair chance when it comes to hiring because they cannot perform without certain accommodations, and they are often passed over. Kathy explains that this is a vicious circle too. It is often not until employers have a positive experience with one disabled employee that they become more likely to hire others:

If a company who've never had anybody with the disability, then, they sort of feel, that they don't want to chance it. Maybe because they don't know what to expect. I think a lot, like I said before, I think a lot of employers are very ignorant to the knowledge... There's a lot of apprehension: "well, what if this doesn't work and what if this and what if that" and there's a lot of questions that they just don't know how to answer because they've never experienced it. But if you have a company with a few people who have had a disability, then I think they have a little better of a chance of accepting somebody into their company.

4.5 Conclusion

Respondents had some strong opinions about what they believe employers think about hiring disabled workers. The women can offer a unique perspective on this topic, having experienced being disabled and trying to maintain paid work. For the most part, respondents felt that based on their previous work experiences that there are certain specific qualities that employers are looking for in a potential employee. For example, Kate who has been diagnosed as bipolar, comments that employers want: "Perfection. They just want the best person, the most normal person, is what I feel." Beth, who has been diagnosed with manic depression, explains some of the qualities she believes employers are looking for in a worker:

Consistent. People that are consistent, dependable, multi-skilled, transferable skills, multi-task, reliable, positive.

These quotes show that many of the women interviewed were conscious about what employers were looking for when it comes to the ideal worker. The characteristics listed by the women show that they believe employers have a specific idea of how employees should act while at work. Many of the women noted that they were treated differently at work, and even in the interview process, because of their disability. For this reason, many women with invisible disabilities opted not to inform their potential employers about their disability.

For many of the women interviewed, they argued that the bottom line for employers is money. If they were not an asset to the company and did not make money for the company, there were either not hired at all, or fired. Many women

feel that because they are unable to work fast enough, or because certain accommodations may be too expensive, employers will not hire them. In the following chapter, employers' experiences will be examined. This chapter examined what the disabled women thought employers were looking for in an ideal employee, as well as their experiences in paid work. The next chapter will focus on employers, where the concept of the ideal worker will be defined, as well as employers experiences will also be examined.

CHAPTER 5

EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE WORK & DISABILITY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains an analysis of the qualitative data collected from employer interviews.² The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first examines employers' conceptions of the ideal worker and the implications of these conceptions for disabled people seeking employment. To a considerable degree, the views of employers about what characteristics they look for in workers mirror the themes identified by the women respondents in chapter 4. The desire for 'flexible' employment arrangements, as well as workers who are able to perform appropriate emotional labour quickly, and with little training appear as recurring themes in employer statements. The second section of the analysis concentrates on employers' views about, and experiences of, hiring and working with disabled people. From the analysis, five overlapping themes emerged that characterize employers' views. These range from a firm sense that disabled people are not suited to a specific work site/occupation to a willingness to provide meaningful accommodations to workers with disabilities.

² Note that the employer interviews were conducted 12 months after the employee interviews. As a result, questions contained in the employer interview guide – for example, with regard to their conception of an ideal worker – were tailored to reflect some of the key themes that had emerged from the earlier interviews.

5.2 Constructing the Ideal Worker

Employment relations – flexibility

Recent scholarship has suggested that flexible work primarily benefits employers (Perrons 2000). In the interviews, many respondents talked about the importance of 'flexible' workers to their organizations – workers who are available to work before and after conventional hours, as well as workers who are available for short hours to meet the changing demands facing specific companies. Frank, the manager of a grocery store, discusses the biggest challenge he faces in finding suitable workers for a supermarket:

Daytime hours, it's the part-time afternoons, if that makes sense... and we don't hire full-time. The majority of those people out there in the workforce who are available... are looking for, if not full-time, they're looking for guaranteed hours. We don't have them. Everything's based on starting at five hours and progressing up. Now, if you were available during the day, you'd probably work...you'd work more than five hours, but a lot of them want more hours than that. And when we do hire people for daytime, they...we have a hard time keeping them. Because we can't give them the hours [manager, grocery store].

Frank refers to the loss of stability and the guaranteed hours that come with permanent full-time work. With traditional full-time employment in decline, workers will often look elsewhere if an employer cannot guarantee that there will be a certain amount of hours, because workers still base quality employment along the same lines as what was prevalent in past decades – full-time employment. However, these types of jobs are increasingly difficult to find. Many employers, like Frank, stated that they primarily hire part-time workers. Christine,

the owner of a home cleaning service, also experiences problems finding workers available to work necessary shifts. She talks about her efforts to gather information about workers' 'flexibility' during interviews:

We also kind of see if it's going to fit, if it's going to be a good marriage within their lifestyle. Because our job is...are, like working through to five. So some people think they can just come to our company and kind of get off at two. Well, it doesn't work that way, sorry. So we have to make sure that a lot of things are tied in, babysitters and stuff like that [owner, cleaning service].

The majority of Christine's workforce is female, and she indicates that she is aware of the gendered responsibilities for childcare that many women face. At the same time, her questions in the interview are designed to establish whether the women are able to arrange the rest of their life so it does not impact on their flexibility at work. This mirrors existing work which suggest that workers who are perceived as 'inflexible' – for example, women with kinds whose domestic responsibilities impact on their work lives – are flagged as problems by employers (Perrons 2000; McDowell 2001). It also reflects numeric flexibility, which has also been linked to the increasing feminization of employment. There seems to be an expectation from Christine and others that workers will adjust their schedule for their employers, who come across generally as inflexible. Employers may be aware of the many other responsibilities workers hold, however employers still expect a high level of dedication from their workers. Furthermore, it is questionable whether it is appropriate to ask potential employees about their lifestyle. As was suggested in chapter 4, the expectation

of flexibility may have implications for women with disabilities, both in terms of managing their impairment and dealing with other care commitments at home.

With the increase in flexible work, employers are looking for workers who are committed to working the shifts required. Les, the manager of a home improvement store, discusses how he informs potential workers about the time commitments at his store:

Obviously what I try to get to the bottom in interviews in is their reliability, commitment, team player. We are open 7 days a week, evenings and Saturdays and Sundays. We need people that really care about their job so reliability and commitment is what I try to get to the bottom of [manager, home improvement store].

Numerous employers are now plagued with additional staffing issues. With stores legally able to open on Sundays, employers now must rely even more on numerical flexibility, in order to cover all of the available shifts. Again, Frank commented:

Sundays now is, with us for the contract is a volunteer day... It's a government law, you cannot make people work Sundays....No, you can't. But we do try to stress in the interview that Sundays are the second busiest day of the week, and if someone couldn't work Sunday, it doesn't automatically dismiss them, but it will depend on what department it would be and how much that department need would be for Sunday help [manager, grocery store].

Although the law indicates that Sunday is a volunteer day, Frank makes it clear that workers who are unwilling to commit to a Sunday shift are less likely to be hired than those who are willing. Similar pressure was evident in other interviews. It was also evident that employers expected workers to really care

about their jobs even though workers were only employed on a part-time or temporary basis. As Les says, 'commitment' and being a 'team player' are important, even though employers' commitment to workers is often limited.

The most extreme form of flexibility is casual work, where workers have a limited sense of when they will work and how long for. Restructuring of cleaning and janitorial sectors, for example, has meant a significant growth in the use of contract workers (Cranford 1998). In interviews, casual employment was also seen to be increasing. Noah, a human resource officer with a school board, commented:

I think in the past five years, certainly in some of the areas that I deal with in the caretaking and cleaning, we have begun to recruit more casual people. Up to about five years ago, we were just hiring people straight in to take on permanent jobs. But about five years ago we began to hire people on a casual basis to in a sense, give them some training, if you like, through casual employment before they become permanent hires.

Likewise, Christine talked about her desire to have more casual workers for her cleaning agency:

We would like to have people that are occasional. We'd like that. We're crying for casual. But there's not too many people who'll go sit by the phone waiting for us to call. Like, they're basically on call. And we'd like to have that, because basically we could...at least offer them, at least one days clean. Or two days with work a week, right. And sometimes some disability people could only handle that [owner, cleaning firm].

As Christine recognizes, the necessity of waiting by the phone is not something many workers would choose. Also significant is the fact that she notes that some disabled people might be willing to work on a casual basis. The expectation that

disabled people might be well suited to fill jobs that other workers might not be willing to take is addressed in more detail in Section 5.3. Casual work can be problematic for workers for several reasons. Workers are often paid less and employers are typically not required to provide benefits and other formal commitments. The unpredictability of casual work can be a source of stress alone. Although Christine suggests that one or two days a week might suit some disabled people, the unpredictability of casual work could make it untenable for workers who have set attendant care schedules or who rely on accessible transportation or who have chronic illnesses, the impacts of which cannot be scheduled to coincide with casual shifts. Others may rely on set hours and guaranteed paychecks for medical costs. These factors combined can make casual work difficult for workers with disabilities to function effectively in the workplace.

For employers, workers must also possess excellent time management skills in order to maintain employment. Being punctual, showing up to work when scheduled and minimal sick time remains a high priority for workers by many employers. Les comments on the necessary skills that workers should possess:

Umm, the customer service skills, balancing cash sheets, having no customer complaints, being on time, not calling in sick. When I say calling in sick three times in the first month obviously we are going to bring it to their attention – you know, we need them here and maybe encourage them to see a doctor. I mean not accusing them of not being sick, but we need to let them know that when they're scheduled they need to be here. I don't know those are just some different examples [manager, home improvement store].

This quote illustrates a variety of expectations put on workers before they have even started to work. Employers expect a great deal from their workers because they are aware of the excess in the current labour pool. Furthermore, employers are able to demand more of their workers because of the changing nature of the work environment. Beyond expectations of timeliness and minimal time absent from work, employers also talked about the commitment of the ideal worker to provide a little extra work when necessary: Walter, the general manager at a local mall, talked about the problem with some people's lack of work ethic:

You know, I mean too many people come in and, and wanna work, but they, under their terms ...Some people say: "I prefer to work eight to four". Well I'm sorry but I told you in the interview it was nine to five the hours, and we're not going to rework the office because you prefer to work eight to four 'cause you have a babysitter problem. I'm sorry, or I missed that bus, I take the GO train or I carpool, so well, you should have discussed that during the interview... That happens a lot, they come in today, and then you know they won't, overtime is taboo. You have a job to do, and this letter is almost finished. It's five to five and there's one last paragraph. So it's just a matter of, your hours are nine to five, but don't go home at, you know. In my case, that would be the end of a short career [manager, local mall].

This statement is interesting because it explicitly contrasts Walter's expectations for workers' flexibility at the office with his lack of flexibility regarding issues such as childcare problems and transportation issues. The reasonable expectation that an administrative worker would stay behind to finish letter does not mean that the same worker could time to attend to childcare when needed. This was seen in numerous employer interviews – there is a lack of flexibility from the

employers regarding scheduling and so on, however, workers are expected to go above and beyond their hours in order to get the job done.

In some larger organizations, flexibility might also mean a willingness on the part of the worker to move between locations. Jessica, a human resource officer, discusses how workers need to be flexible:

We have sixty locations. You may be transferred. We may need your services elsewhere. And people have to understand that some of the jobs you might have to be moved... if you're a teacher, you may be transferred. If you're an EA, you may be transferred based on the needs of the kids. There's postings for care taking and cleaning, you know, all areas are flexible. And you have to know that going in [human resource officer, school board].

The expectation that workers are able to switch locations may be problematic for some people with mobility impairments. Public transit services, particularly accessible transportation services, are not the most flexible modes of transportation. Accessible transportation often requires scheduling in advance so that moves, particularly in the short term could pose problems. Some women interviewed in chapter 4 noted that they had turned down jobs because they were unable to use public transit to reach work sites. Additionally, there is no guarantee that different parts/sites of large organizations are all equally accessible as far as the built environment is concerned. Furthermore, for workers with intellectual or learning disabilities, the change in geographical location could also be challenging.

In sum, employers' expectations with regard to employment relations focus on the need for workers to be flexible in terms of hours and shifts to

accommodate the needs of the organization. They also express strong views with regard to other forms of flexibility such as unpaid overtime, not calling in sick and being willing to move location within a large organization. While these expectations have implications for all workers, they may make life for disabled women difficult (especially if they are also responsible for child care). For example, the coordination of accessible transit, family commitments and medical appointments, as well as the need to manage the effects of an impairment on the self may make it difficult for women to approximate the flexible ideal, as was evident in chapter 4.

The labour process: emotional & embodied labour

The performance of work is very important in the service industry. Considerable emphasis is placed on workers' ability to be personable and 'well put together'. Performance, in both an emotional and embodied sense, is a large part of a service workers job. However, there are differences within the service industry with regard to the performances required. For example in a retail or restaurant atmosphere, employers are primarily looking for workers who are outgoing, energetic and well put together. On the other hand, when looking at the care taking and cleaning industry, employers would prefer workers who were generally more reserved – able to moderate their emotions so as not to disturb others. In janitorial and cleaning occupations, the emphasis is based on the quality of the

work done by the worker. These types of jobs are seen as invisible work – the workers are only visible when the job is not done correctly.

In retail and restaurant work, workers must use their personalities to sell products, as well as to keep the customers coming back. Routinization of the service provided is common in most service industries as a management tool to control workers, beginning with a standard greeting, and ending with a specified farewell (Crang 1994). Socialization between the greetings and farewells has been called the 'order of service' – where workers have certain steps that they must take with the customer, in order to fulfill the specific company's goals of quality customer service. This routinization allows for easier monitoring of workers by management, to enforce the order of service (Crang, 1994). However with most service jobs, management cannot always monitor the worker/ customer interactions, the order of service allows management to follow up on workers at certain stages of the interaction, ensuring that the worker is performing as required by the company. This can be classified as a three-way relationship between the management workers and customers. Although in most situations an order of service is provided for workers, there is still a lot more going on during the interactions between workers and customers. The order of service can be seen as a skeleton, while it is up to the individual worker to navigate through every encounter, as every meeting with every customer is different (Crang, 1994).

Apart from routinization, workers are expected to provide that 'little extra' while performing their job. For example, servers must add personal touches to their greetings and farewells in order not to sound fake, so that their performance is believable as well as to aid in making the customers feel comfortable in the setting. Making this discourse even more complicated, workers are to act as if they are not acting, as if they are truly being themselves – which is of course, upbeat, happy, friendly people, all of the time. Hochschild (1983), describes this as surface acting, where the actor's body, (in this case the worker's body), not the soul evokes passion from the audience; however the worker is only acting, and he/she does not really experience the emotional interaction, they are more concerned with how the audience will perceive the interaction. In the restaurant setting, workers are 'rewarded' for this extra service by way of receiving tips from clients. Because of this, workers are not in control of their performance, it is up to the customers to decide if the service they received from the worker was acceptable, and typically, their judgment of service is reflected through the amount of tip left.

From the outset, employers and managers expect workers to demonstrate 'performative potential'. Even during the interview process, employers are looking for potential workers willing to 'sell themselves' to the interviewer. Employers look to the interview as a first impression, and as how potential workers will perform in the future. Susan, the manager at a fitness club states:

At the end of the interview, I close everything, I sit down and say, I've got one more question and that question is why should I hire you? And I

always put a lot of emphasis on that, like it's dramatic, because I want you to sell it to me. I want you to sell yourself to me. Why are you any different than the fourteen [other] people? Like, why are you any different? "Oh, because I'm honest and I'm reliable." Well, give me something else that I can chew on 'cause we are in the business about selling. I want you to sell yourself [manager, fitness club].

Susan's quote is curious in the sense that one might assume an employee of a fitness centre is in the business of fitness and exercise, rather than of selling. Her statement says a great deal about the emotional performance expected from workers in many service jobs where they are expected to sell themselves – and the organization – to clients and customers in the context of interactions. Susan – like other respondents – expects potential employees to start selling themselves in order to successfully compete for the job.

In many service jobs, a part of the work is based on public interaction and emotional labour. Because of this, employers place a strong emphasis on personality of their workers during the hiring process. Respondents strongly emphasized personality above all other criteria for service jobs, arguing that if a worker has the 'personality' they can be trained to do any job. Education and skills are no longer the most important qualification, as long as someone have an outgoing personality and is 'well put together'. The following quotes reflect the consistent emphasis on personality

Personality, personality equals customer service. That's how I run my business here. Personality um, you have to be approachable, you have to have a smile... Don't be shy, don't hide in the corner, cause you know, you're not going to make a sale, you're not going to help the business if you're off in the side... Ah you just need to, you need to have fun at your job. If you come and you're all gloomy, you know, there's no personality,

customers are not gonna wanna buy from somebody, they should get away from home to get away from the gloomy, you know [manager, retail clothing chain].

Personality, personality, if you've got personality I'll train ya. Anybody can do this job. You know, anybody can be a floor staff, anybody can pick up weights, and talk to people, but I need to know, you shouldn't hide away, talk to people, they can talk to people one on one, but you get them in a group atmosphere, they tighten up. You have to talk to people, you hafta help. I want you to be helpful, I want you to, I want everyone that walks in that door to feel welcome... [manager, fitness club] .

I look number one for personality. Um, number two, I'll look at experience, and um, basically their character, how they interact with me during the interview. How they speak, um experience is great, but not always necessary. You can always teach people the job, but sometimes you can't teach them a personality, so, um, that's obviously my number one thing...How they interact with me on a number one basis, I look for confidence, um, because they have to interact with customers... [manager, retail clothing chain].

No experience is necessary, to be a server, cook or a host. We'll bring them in and train them. It's more of an attitude or a demeanor I look for and intelligence kind of thing....People sometimes come in with bartending courses and stuff under their belt, that's all fine and good, but its not necessary... You can teach a dog to cook, so that's my old line as long as they have the attitude and the intelligence [manager, restaurant].

Thinking back to women's statements about emotional performance in chapter 4, these statements have several implications. For respondents, the ability to perform appropriately is identified as being more valuable than a specific skill set or training that someone might bring to a service job. Workers have to sell themselves, act friendly, be outgoing, smile and enjoy their interactions with customers. They must have a 'passion' for the type of work they are doing, they

must exude confidence, and demonstrate proper manners. For workers with disabilities, this type of labour may be challenging, as they may not be able to approximate what the employers are looking for in terms of personality and performance work. For someone with a psychiatric disability, the ability to deal with these demands can be difficult. At the same time, the elevation of personality above skills and experiences may mean that disabled people who possess the necessary skills for a job but cannot demonstrate 'enough' personality may be placed at a disadvantage. Thinking back to the employee chapter, some women had difficulties performing the general tasks at work, and adding the component of having to surface act while working may create stress for disabled workers. Again, for a job that is supposed to be low skilled and low wage is this asking too much? Some disabled women found the demand for emotional labour, along with their general tasks to be emotionally and physically draining, to the point where they struggled in the workplace.

As was suggested in chapter 4, the women's experiences suggested that emotional labour could also be linked to employer demands for 'body work' in service occupations, where this implied that workers were supposed to use their physical appearance, movement and posture to convey something about themselves – and the company – in their interactions with clients. Employers also talked about this issue. There were a number of different types of statements. Some, for example, suggested that the ability to demonstrate appropriate personality and emotion came in part through sometimes quite subtle

forms of body work. For example, the manager of a retail store explained what she looked for in an employee:

They have, like, good eye contact, someone that listens well, um someone that asks questions. Hmm, let me see... somebody that puts a little bit of, you can see that they're putting a little bit of thought into what they're going to say, before they say it. We also look at you know, how they're dressed, you know, that kind of thing, you know, how they present themselves [manager, retail store].

That's what you look for in this industry...looking me in the eye and being confident in who they are, 'cause if they are confident in who they are they'll be confident out here with the servers and customers that come to the door. And smiling is a huge thing, especially if it's out here [waiting tables] [manager, restaurant].

I think not much as skill that I look for as much as in people who are eager and willing to learn... I think you, you know, sound funny, but if you watch somebody move, how fast they walk. I'll tell you, that is the most telling tale of hiring somebody... Like, no one does but I've talked to many managers and we've discussed that, and it was actually...it's watching people move when they come in for an interview, and watching the pace in which they walk into the door, and when they leave the door. The most important thing, I think, if I was going for an application in that situation... is how they present themselves and I don't mean that they have a suit and tie, but just how they move [manager, grocery store].

In these and other quotes, emphasis is placed on things such as eye contact, listening well, smiling, taking care of dress and general presentation, and so on. Moreover, the quote from the grocery store manager places considerable emphasis on the motion of a person's body as evidence of his/her worth as a potential worker. These quotes tie in with statements from people in chapter 4

about the expectation that workers will manage their appearances and bodily performance appropriately.

In addition, in the context of retail and restaurant work, emphasis was placed on the 'right look' for employees. Employers preferred workers to be clean cut, well presented, neat and professional so that they effectively represent the company. At the same time, some respondents noted the physical attractiveness of workers in food service jobs, an issue that is gendered because waiting tables is disproportionately a women's job. Steve, the manager at a restaurant, comments:

Well, obviously in the front [of the restaurant] – not that you have to be attractive, but you have to be well presented, kind of thing [manager, restaurant].

Although Steve indicates that is not essential to be 'attractive' to be out front waiting tables, his emphasis on physical appearance and presentation suggests that the aesthetic issue is one, which plays into hiring decisions. From the perspective of workers with disabilities, employers' expectations about the ability of workers to provide the right kind of emotional and embodied labour can prove difficult. People with a variety of different physical disabilities may not fit the image of the 'well put-together' employee who moves in the right way, while people with psychiatric and learning disabilities may find it difficult to give valued emotional performances. Emotional labour, mediated through bodily performance places pressure on disabled workers, such as the women in this thesis.

The labour process: pace of work

As was noted earlier, speed has been a long time concern for employers in capitalist economies. In recent years, workloads for workers have also increased because of the reorganization of work, speed-up, and technological advances, forcing workers to produce more output with fewer workers. Because of the changing nature of employment and increased insecurity, workers are willing to work longer and harder in hopes of maintaining employment (Smith 1998).

Speed is becoming increasingly important for workers in the service sector, as with the increase in technology, employers are able to closely monitor their output (Roulstone 2002). Cashiers are monitored by how many items are scanned per minute, while telephone operators have their calls recorded for quality, and the numbers of calls made per shift monitors them. Another example is McDonald's concept of 'maximum service time', where time limits are placed on workers for every customer (Ritzer, 1993). In chapter 4, women respondents identified employer demands for speed as a key pressure that they faced at work. Perhaps not surprisingly, employers stressed the importance of speed from their perspective in the context of interviews. Frank, for example, discusses the most important aspect of the job for his workers:

I think being able to keep up with the pace, whether they're a cashier and they're rings per minute...cashiers are the easiest because you can always check, you're working on numbers right, I mean, everything's written there. There it is. But...so if you looked at it, you look at how many rings per minute, how voids they're bringing up, how many audit transactions... So it's something that we can tell real fast...Speed is

important in almost everything we do. Have you ever waited in a line? People are just sort of, you know, they expect you to get through as quick as possible [manager, grocery store].

Significantly, Frank identifies 'the customer' as the driving force behind demands for speed in the service sector, which rather oversimplifies the evolving relationship between production and consumption (see Reiter 1996). Frank also points to the use of technology to monitor speed among workers such as cashiers. Allison, the human resource manager at a call center, also notes the importance of technology in the monitoring of workers' performance:

We have the coaches and supervisors who monitor not to mention the reports that we do. We do dailies, and we do weeklies, and a, a daily is a printout of every single worker by worker number so it's confidential, by worker number and that worker number will tell you all of your stats. How long you have been on the phone, how many logged hours, how many production hours, how many sales per hour um, jeez, your time between calls, your efficiency, your quality scores, everything [human resource manager, call center].

From these managers' perspectives, technology has aided in making policing workers easier, as it is clear if they are making sales quotas. Employers have proof (e.g., cash register scans per hour) of the output and productivity of workers, and it cannot be disputed. Interestingly, Allison works in a building where the managers are physically raised above the workers on the floor, so managers are also able to visually check on workers' performance. However, it is also important to note that not all workers' speed is as easily policed. While cashiers' speed can be checked using scan data, other workers may be less easily monitored. Asked about monitoring workers' progress, Barb commented:

It's easier to do the cashiers, because they're based on how many items that they're, they're putting through in an hour. So we can easily measure them a lot easier than, the sales associate, now the sales associate they're, they're, they're keeping their, areas tidy, filling up, customer service. So it's a little harder to, to judge them [manager, discount super store].

While it is important to flag these variations in the capacity of employers to monitor speed, the emphasis on the importance of speed came through in many interviews with both workers and employers in retail services, home care, cleaning and other occupations. For workers with disabilities, as was noted in chapter 4, the preoccupation with speed can be troublesome. For women with mobility impairments and those with learning disabilities performing at the required speed could be difficult or even impossible. Furthermore, the increased monitoring can be a source of stress for those who are unable to perform at the pace required by the employers. Some women had difficulties keeping up with the pace of work, which caused them added stress in the workplace. Many left jobs or were dismissed as a result.

The labour process: adaptive flexibility & teamwork

Another issue raised by employers concerns their expectations with regard to multi-tasking and teamwork. The use of 'adaptive flexibility' has become increasingly common in recent years, with workers expected to perform multiple tasks in the workplace in the interests of maximizing flexibility and reducing labour costs. The use of teams is often associated with multi-tasking, as workers

are expected to move between different positions, substituting for each other as demands shift over time. Employer respondents in retail particularly emphasized their reliance on multi-tasking and teamwork. The following excerpts from two interviews speak to this issue:

See everybody does everything. So, like everybody goes up the ladders, everybody does merchandising, so they'd have to um, be physically able to do things [assistant manager, clothing store].

Everybody has a distinct job description and if you followed strictly that job description, no, we probably wouldn't work together very much. But we work together to achieve sales budgets, as opposed to all working against each other and fighting for commission, and um, we try very hard to attain that together. If somebody is missing their budget, we all work to sell towards their goal. If stock needs to get done, we don't just leave the stock girl to do it, if it's not busy, we all help. If we have to put together units on the floor, we don't leave that to the stock girl, we'll all help... I will not do anything, I should say, I will do everything that I ask my staff to do [manager, clothing outlet].

Both statements emphasize that workers are expected to do everything in the store, in the interests of meeting the overall targets and goals of the store. The second quote is particularly interesting as the manager places considerable emphasis on the "we" of the team, diminishing the difference between himself and his workers. Teamwork is used as an increasingly common form of management control. As several scholars have noted, teamwork has helped to flatten workplace hierarchies and shifted power for the regulation of work to the workers themselves (Smith 1998). In the quote above, the manager positions himself as 'one of the team', all of whom are expected to pull together. Each member of the team is responsible for ensuring that all members pull their weight

with the tasks that need to be accomplished. With less overt managerial supervision, teamwork places more responsibility on the workers themselves.

For managers, teamwork is becoming a tactic of adaptive flexibility, used on workers to increase productivity and output, as every one is expected to do more than one job. Workers are often required to work through, or rotate through all of the different areas in the workplace, rather than just staying in one designated area, such as the cash register. The use of multi-tasking and teamwork means that sales jobs may entail a range of tasks that require physical strength and stamina, such as stocking and assembling display units. As a result, the requirement to multi-task can have numerous implications for workers with disabilities. If workers are unable to perform certain tasks, they become problem workers or are not hired in the first place. In the context of the team, as we saw in chapter 4, if someone is unable to perform all necessary tasks, they can be disciplined by other members of the team. Some disabled workers can counter the team/multi-tasking expectations by explaining their limitations to co-workers and making alternative arrangements.

Overall, when discussing what they look for in an ideal worker, employers make frequent reference to individuals who are flexible in terms of how and when they work, and who possess the appropriate personality and embodied characteristics to effectively represent the company and service clients. In addition, these workers must be able to keep up with the increasingly fast pace of work, as well as have significant physical strength and stamina in order to fit in

well with the 'team' and be capable of performing multiple tasks at the job site as conditions demand. Although employers were asked about these criteria with no reference to the topic of disability, it is clear that these expectations hold implications for disabled people in their efforts to find and keep paid employment. As was evident in chapter 4, the women talked specifically about problems they encountered with employers' demands for speed and flexibility among other issues. It is possible to suggest that many of the criteria identified by employers are underlain by an implicit assumption of able-bodiedness. As a result, disabled workers may not 'fit' into the themes identified by employers. The remainder of this chapter examines employers' responses to questions specifically about the hiring and accommodation of workers with disabilities. The range of responses suggests that some employers are more willing than others to look beyond prevailing assumptions about the productivity of disabled people, although with mixed implications for the disabled people themselves.

5.3 Hiring and Working With Disabled Employees

The previous section offers insight on what employers are looking for when they hire new workers, and we have come to see how these employers conceptualize an 'ideal worker'. This section reflects on employers' opinions about the employability of disabled people in particular occupational settings. In the context of interviews, employers were asked to define 'disability'. Many provided broad definitions that most often included physical disabilities, sensory and

learning/intellectual conditions. Psychiatric conditions were included slightly less frequently, perhaps reflecting the fact that these conditions are more often referred to as 'illnesses' rather than disabilities in everyday language.

In the course of analysis, five *overlapping* themes were identified that captured employers' statements about the employability of disabled people. They are overlapping in the sense that employers often used more than one theme in the context of their interview. These themes are as follows:

- Not in this line of work
- Everyone is equal
- Charity and compassion
- Opportunities for exploitation
- Meaningful accommodation

Not in this line of work

The first theme identified has been labelled "not in this line of work" to capture instances where employers explained why they thought their work place was not an appropriate place for a disabled worker. Each employer identified certain aspects of the job and/or workplace that they felt would prevent the hiring of a disabled worker. Most of these statements were made with regard to either physical disabilities or learning and psychiatric disabilities.

When looking at physical disabilities, employers explained why they felt that workers with specific physical 'limitations' would not be well suited for their

type of employment. The following quotes are illustrative of this type of argument:

Some of the maintenance work might be a little more difficult, like on the roof and stuff like that. Where you have, you know, heavy work and you also need mechanical ability. And if your, these guys, you know, I couldn't even do the work, I mean, I know how to do it in theory, but I couldn't do the work [Walter, manager, local mall]

The only thing is...like, in a wheelchair, *you can't clean a home in a wheelchair*. You just can't... if they're in a wheelchair, there's absolutely no way. That it, wouldn't work in this business [Christine, owner, cleaning service – emphasis added].

Physical disabilities, whether they were able to perform all the tasks in the store, *because obviously you couldn't work around that*... Say in this environment, it would be hard to hire someone in a wheelchair because of the way the store is set up. We could get down all our aisles not necessarily easily. And because of the way our clothing and that is stocked...it would be hard for them to, like wait on a customer, because it would be hard for them to get to all the stock [Mary, manager operator, retail chain – emphasis added].

Someone that maybe can't get around as well as, as um, the average person... you know, there's things that you have that we have to be able to do here, you know, the displays are quite high. If someone is willing, not willing, if someone is able to reach them, like we have poles and stuff the all have to use. Occasionally you have to get up on a ladder to do something, um, you know, it's just hard to say. *See, everybody does everything* [Isabelle, assistant manager, retail chain – emphasis added].

How should we interpret these statements? Walter is justified in suggesting that maintenance work on the roof of the mall would be difficult for someone with a mobility impairment. Christine's statement that people in wheelchairs cannot clean homes is an overgeneralization. It might be more accurate to suggest that

people using wheelchairs cannot clean homes that are not accessible, and that these individuals may find it difficult to clean a poorly designed home in the time that Christine allots for the task. These qualifications are important because they move away from the supposedly innate capacity of disabled people. The statements from Isabelle and Mary both link back to the earlier discussion about employers' expectations about teamwork and multi-tasking. Individuals with mobility impairments would not be hired in these positions because of the physical design of the store, and the expectations that "everybody does everything". This position is based in part on a reluctance to accommodate physically disabled workers. In retail, for example, a physically disabled worker may not be able to climb a ladder, but could perform other duties. While relatively simple solutions are available for employers, the philosophy of multi-tasking dictates otherwise.

Similar assumptions emerge in connection with people who have learning and/or psychiatric disabilities. Employers in this theme argued that these individuals would not fit into their work environment. Their positions tended to reflect the assumption that people with these types of disabilities are slow, unsuitable, and often unable to complete the required tasks. Mona, for example, discusses her concerns about hiring a person with a learning disability:

The only disability that would obviously, ah, unfortunately would be the learning disability, because that's where I need somebody that's gonna be quick, on the ball, when we have a lineup and things like that [manager, retail clothing store].

Where performance is involved, employers had some concerns about hiring disabled workers. Susan discusses her experiences with an employee who had a learning disability:

We've only had just, ah, one person with a learning disability, and he only lasted about three months. It was really too overwhelming for him, with all the people talking and this is a high-energy place too, and it was just too, too much... [manager, fitness club].

In both instances, employers are talking about the way in which the expectation of speed – a key part of the organizational culture in retail and reinforced by the expectations of customers – means that individuals with learning disabilities are deemed to be 'out of place'. These statements, reinforcing the employer emphasis on performance, connect back to the discussion in section 5.2.

Some employers also suggested that people with psychiatric disabilities might be unable to provide another key aspect of service work: emotional labour.

Peter discusses his concerns with hiring a worker with a psychiatric disability:

Because we're in such a social type of, ah, business, ah, someone with some emotional disabilities, or some mental disabilities, may not be the optimum environment for them. But again, it's a case by case basis, so certainly, ah, you know we would never say no, you know, we would have to look through that and see what situations arise [manager, banquet center].

The position that some jobs are not well-suited to disabled people seems more justifiable in some instances than in others. The organization of the physical environment may be difficult to change without an employer facing 'undue hardship' in financial terms. But expectations of multi-tasking, speed and emotional labour also make it difficult for disabled people to acquire service

employment. To what extent can we or should we expect employers to change elements of their organizational culture in order to provide disabled people with employment?

Everyone is equal (as long as they can do the job)

A second theme deals with the employers' conception that hiring should be based on skill sets and qualifications alone, where nothing else about the identity of the individual is taken into consideration. Parallels were made here to the issue of gender and racial equity in hiring. From this perspective, a person's disability – to the extent possible – should not be considered in the hiring process. This theme was prevalent among respondents from larger companies, especially those where employers and management have been trained in Human Resource Management. The following four quotes are representative of this theme, where the emphasis is placed on the person with a disability being treated 'just like everybody else'

They'd have to be able to do the job like anyone else. I mean, if they could do the job, I can't see that it would be a benefit or not of a benefit. You know what I mean? [Mary, manager, retail chain].

I would say that they're just, just as they want to be treated like everybody else, they're just like everybody else. And I have to tell you I know this sounds really bad, but we do have progressive discipline so even if they're not following quality, they're going to be treated exactly the same way and but again, they're just like everyone else [Allison, human resource officer, call center].

If the person had the education I was looking for, they had the qualities that I was looking for. I thought that they would fit in with the team – I wouldn't have a problem. I don't think employers should be expected to change their employment hiring standards to accommodate somebody with a disability. If you don't have the skills, you don't have the ability, then I don't care if you're able bodied or not – I can't hire you [Cathy, manager, homecare agency].

I've always been of the mind set equal work for equal pay regardless if you're male, female or you have a disability. If you can physically do the job then I'll bring you in and give you a shot. But if you're physically unable to do the job I don't consider that discrimination that's just... when you're an employer why should you give a job to somebody that's disabled as opposed to not disabled when one can do the job better [Steve, manager, restaurant].

These statements are interesting in the sense that they appear to depart quite significantly from the statements in the previous section making clear that disabled people were not well suited to a particular position. Here, emphasis is placed on equal treatment under equal conditions. A person is hired on the basis of certain skills and abilities rather than on the basis of whether they are disabled or not. However, these quotes also contain references back to the ideal characteristics that employers identified in the previous section – for example, fitting in with the team. Moreover, the idea that everyone should be treated equally is problematic from the perspective of disabled workers precisely because the very idea of accommodation at work rests on the principle that certain changes may be needed to make it possible for a disabled person to complete the essential tasks of a specific job. There is no talk of accommodations for potential workers here – people will gain employment only if

they are able to do the required tasks. Employers will hire workers as long as they are able to do the job, however this position does not recognize the inadequacies of the workplace and labour process. In this sense, the discourse of 'a level playing field' allows employers to sound inclusive even though the outcome of hiring practices may be as exclusionary as the previous theme.

Some employers looked at the issue of equal treatment from a different perspective, looking through the eyes of the disabled worker. These employers seemed concerned for the workers and argued that they were concerned about hiring them in the event that the worker could not perform the required tasks. However, in the end, their decisions were based on whether the worker was able to complete the necessary requirements of the job. Carol expresses her concerns in the following way:

In this store, I would have some concerns, there's a lot of lifting, moving things around constantly, it's 7,000 square feet approximately, so it's a lot of room, if it's somebody who, um, is, you know, is uncomfortable or who has something wrong with their legs, or um, you know can't be on their feet, *you cannot sit at all during your shift except for on your breaks*, so obviously that would be a concern. I would hire somebody with a disability, depending on what it was, do you know what I mean, like I would never put them in a situation where they would be set up to fail [manager, retail clothing chain – emphasis added].

Again, the statement from Carol implies overt willingness to hire a worker with a disability as well as a level of concern with the worker's experience at the workplace. Yet this level of concern does not extend to a consideration of the fact that a worker with a physical disability might need to sit during their shift (indeed, this might also be true of all the workers).

There is a lack of recognition of the constraints facing disabled workers. In fact, respondents often tended to overlook enduring inequities built into work environments and labour processes. This tendency was produced in part by a lack of understanding about the contextual nature of access and accommodation, but also by an assumption that disabled people should be responsible for seeking out appropriate work environments. As an human resource officer from the public school board commented:

If they're an accountant and they are bound to their wheelchair, couldn't they get a job as an accountant somewhere that is wheelchair accessible? I don't see what the problem would be.

To the extent that these sentiments inform the hiring practices of these and other employers, they narrow the employment opportunities for workers requiring accommodations, despite claims of a level playing field.

Charity Cases & Compassion

A third theme captured some employers' sense that employing disabled person constituted a form of compassion for persons less fortunate than themselves.

This sentiment was most often expressed in connection with people with learning or intellectual disabilities. The assumption underlying this theme is that people with these types of disabilities cannot perform the duties of a regular worker, but that in some instances they deserve to be employed as a form of charity.

Employers stated that they were giving the disabled person an 'opportunity' and

helping someone out. Les, for example, talks about an individual employed at his store:

People that are underprivileged whether it is physically or mentally, I really have a soft spot for those kind of people and if there is a place for them in the workforce, I really support trying to have them in our store. For example, right in our store we have a fellow who has Downs Syndrome working in our parts department and he does unbelievable work for us... we don't really ask him to do customer service things, but as far as cleaning shelves, dusting that kind of stuff he is just great [Les, president, retail chain].

Along similar lines, Joanne talks about her willingness to employ someone with a disability to help out and to provide someone with an opportunity:

I just adore people. Especially when they're disabled because I look at them and go "you know what, I have to stop complaining". Because look at like, they make the best of their life. So I would have...I would love to give someone an opportunity because it would make them feel good and it would make me feel good [Joanne, owner, fast food chain].

These quotes are interesting for a number of reasons. First, they illustrate the employers' willingness to hire disabled workers because they feel that it is an appropriate and compassionate thing to do. These employers expressed a strong commitment to helping out in the community, and felt that they were doing a good deed by hiring a disabled worker. At the same time, it could also be argued that employers benefit in a number of ways from the presence of these workers. For example, the employee at Les' workplace was on a work placement and paid by a community agency rather than by Les himself. Joanne suggests that she would benefit by having a disabled person around because she would feel better about herself – a 'there but for the grace of God go I' experience.

Moreover, this experience has implications for disabled people if they are hired as 'token' workers, and treated paternalistically within the organization.

In addition, some employers felt that they benefited from hiring a disabled worker in terms of making the company appear to be a responsible corporate citizen within the community. Frank and Lois talked about the benefits of hiring someone with a learning or intellectual disability:

A lot of people like to see that people are given equal opportunity who do have disabilities in the workforce you know, that companies do make concessions to try to help some people out. And most people with disabilities are very positive people with very good customer relations skills. They love the communication, and the customers feed off of that... It really is a real benefit as far as what your community sees and it can really keep a lot of people shopping at your location [Frank, manager, grocery store].

The benefit for us would be we are a corporate citizen, we are part of the community and as a result of that we would welcome opportunities to participate in that, if that means helping out, shall we call it the more disadvantaged? [Lois, administrator, long-term care facility].

These quotes show how employers may benefit from having a disabled worker in the sense that they improve the company's image and community relations for the business. This could produce problems for the disabled workers because they may feel that they are employed because of their condition, not because of their skills, as a worker valuable to the company.

Last, several respondents in this theme talked about the benefits derived by employers from wage subsidy programs offered by the provincial government.

Talking about the advantages of wage subsidies and the resulting work

placements, the manager of a restaurant commented:

I think the [subsidy] programs are good and should be expanded. It's good for the restaurant industry because there's a lot of stuff that is not, let's not put the word mindless but doesn't take a lot of thought like portioning control and rice portioning, pasta portioning things like that. It doesn't take a lot of effort to do it but it gives them something to do [Steve, manager, restaurant].

A response like this can be interpreted in different ways. In one sense, it suggests that that government programs such as the wage subsidy scheme successfully facilitate the entry of disabled people into paid work. However, it can also be read to suggest that such programs produce subsidize disabled workers to do what Steve almost calls the 'mindless' work of the service sector. What are the implications of encouraging disabled people to take up such positions? This topic is explored further in the fourth theme.

Opportunities for exploitation

The fourth theme concerns the potential for exploitation of disabled workers. Although emphasis has been placed so far on the problems disabled people have in securing work, some employers in the service sector talked about the fact that disabled people might be well suited to employment. This was often the case in cleaning work, care work and other occupations that have been subject to downgrading. In these instances, employers looked at disabled workers as being grateful to have a job, so these workers are obedient and easily controlled. In this sense, a troubling parallel can be drawn between disabled workers and recent

immigrant groups. Research has shown that some recent immigrants often face high levels of exploitation in the labour market because they are discriminated against and forced into low-skilled work where they work long hours for low pay (Pratt 1998; Hiebert 1999). While the processes at work for disabled people and recent immigrants may be somewhat different, a common theme is that they are perceived as being more docile and less likely to complain, in large part because they have few other options. In the context of interviews, several employers suggested that this was a positive characteristic of disabled workers:

They're loyal people, they've been through a lot, disability people. And the benefit that I would see in hiring them is that they would just give you a hundred and ten percent because they've been through so much. And if someone gave them a break, they would just give more than their share. I wish I can have twenty of them [Christine, owner, cleaning service].

Ah, working with a lot of disabled people, especially kids, you find a, a lot are very obedi, you know, willing to please, almost ready to do anything that you ask for. Ah, it almost seems like their, going back to the responsibility, almost seems like on the whole you have a lot more responsibility, coming from them [Peter, manager, banquet center].

They always feel that they have to prove, so they work harder, Ok, so you're getting a good hard working associate, because that, you know, just like putting a girl in the automotive department, ok, you know, changing tires and all, she always has to work harder to prove that she can do the job better than the guys [Barb, personnel, discount department store].

These quotes show how employers often see disabled workers as docile and obedient. Thus, although disabled people may depart from the ideal worker in other respects discussed earlier (flexibility, multi-tasking, etc), in certain low-skilled occupations such as cleaning and care-work they may be seen as

desirable workers. Disabled workers may not often speak out or complain in fear of losing employment. They may be willing to work harder than 'normal' workers, in order to prove their worth as an employee. Loyalty and unwillingness not to protest unfair conditions could make the employers' job easier. Furthermore, in sectors that have a difficult time attracting staff, loyalty is a trait often difficult to find. Christine, for example, discusses the turnover rate in her company:

We have a high turnover. People will come in, they say they like to clean, but once you get out there, it's totally different. People think that cleaning, just the, you know, wipe the table – it's clean. They don't consider like, the legs or the chairs or anything like that. So once they realize that they have to do that, you know, we have a very high turnover rate... That's the biggest challenge is to keep finding the staff and to keep them there. People don't work like they used to work. People are...government programs allow people to be lazy [owner, cleaning service].

Although Christine suggests that it is a work ethic problem, the high turnover may be due more to the physically demanding nature of the work, the low wages (starting at \$7.00/hour) and other issues such as the fact that the company does not pay for travel time between homes. In the context of such high turnover, she talks about how much she values a woman with a learning disability who works for her.

Just the way that she works and her love of integrity. She doesn't get in confrontation with the customer. She does a good job. The customers always want her. No, I just wish I had more of her [owner, cleaning service].

Again, while Christine's view of the worker is positive, it is important to look at the broader context for this situation. Given the problems finding staff for low-wage cleaning work, the fact that a disabled woman stays at the job and doesn't 'get

into confrontations' with clients or complain makes her an ideal worker in this sector. The fact that disabled people feel the need to work harder than others people, and the fact that they avoid complaining for fear of losing their jobs means that they are vulnerable to exploitation at work.

Meaningful Accommodations

A final theme that was found concerns some employers' willingness to hire disabled employees and at the same time recognize their responsibilities to provide reasonable accommodations. It is significant that knowledge about accommodation and the expressed willingness to accommodate people in the workplace came disproportionately – but not exclusively – from public and non-profit employers. While the sample size for the project prevents any reliable generalization to the larger population of employers, this finding is not surprising given the organizational climate of the non-profit sector and the higher union density in the public sector. It also suggests that these sectors may offer more supportive work environments (also Hall 2004). Laura expressed an explicit commitment to a diverse workforce that was representative of the populations the organization served:

We are very active to make sure that we actually have – to make sure that my staff are representative of the people that are working for. So we have people who have physical disabilities here. I've had staff who have had psychiatric illnesses. The physical disabilities are pretty easy actually, because you can say to the person, what is a limitation for you? And we have adapted whatever is necessary. We have one woman here who has a visual impairment, so we had to purchase a larger computer screen for her and magnifiers, so that she can read things a little easier. So we've

increased the font on our computers, and all sorts of other things to make it easier for her to read [Laura, director, charitable organization].

Joan also demonstrated a good understanding of the existing accommodation provisions and – perhaps more significantly – a sense of what those provisions meant in practice:

We've got a wheelchair ramp, the doorways are fairly wide. You know, we would be able to accommodate workstations ...we look at what the physical demands are, and then can the, like because if some of our workers are injured, we need to know what the physical demands of the roles are, and then how can the situation be accommodated so that the person can take on those roles... I know there is a duty to accommodate for workplace injuries up to the point of hardship for the company, and that's really scary when you read it in those terms, but our actual practice hasn't been that difficult [director, health/social service organization].

Her statement suggests that while the language of 'undue hardship' can be alarming to employers, the reality is that many accommodations and adjustments can be done relatively inexpensively. This observation is important as it suggests that many employers with little experience of disabled workers may view the issue of accommodation with a sense of fear, not least concerning the potential financial consequences.

In the public sector, respondents also discussed instances of meaningful accommodation. Noah, for example, discusses some of his experience at the public school board:

A few years ago at this building we had a gentleman who, he had Multiple Sclerosis, who we took on really for a...a sort of, I won't say a special job, but he was able to assist our planning department with a lot of work and then assisted our own area here in calling people who were off on WSIB absences and that sort of thing. And we were able though grant

assistances to equip him with the necessary equipment. We set up a little office for him down in our basement. Unfortunately the disease was progressing, so eventually he was no longer able to come to work to the building, so we moved the office to his house...I guess it goes back to the main concerns of how can we adapt what we have here or wherever to accommodate that individual. We knew there was a way we could do it and that we had the will to do it [human resource officer, public school board].

Given the size of the organization and the expertise of HR personnel, the school board may have been in a position to offer extensive accommodations and alternatives for the employee. In addition, the person for whom Noah was arranging these accommodations was a skilled employee. In the context of interviews it was found that accommodations of this nature were more likely to be provided to skilled and professional workers rather than low-skilled service workers.

In the for-profit, private sector, although some respondents expressed a willingness to accommodate, instances of actual accommodation were recounted less frequently. However, those that had been implemented often resulted in positive outcomes for both workers and employers: Barb talks about a change that was made to the schedule of a woman worker:

The only thing is that you know, we did, the hours, you know, like on an Saturday and a Sunday... the shift actually is seven to three-thirty, and we had to modify it to ten to six-thirty, ah, because she does take certain medications and to accommodate those medications, we did have to modify the shift. In fact it, it probably gave it better coverage, because now she looks after, you know, cleaning up the offices, emptying the garbage's, and emptying the garbage's throughout the store, making sure all our paper towels are filled [personnel, discount department store].

Although these accommodations made were not major, they enabled the woman to successfully perform all of the duties required that would not have been possible without accommodations. While there were several other instances where accommodations had provided opportunities for disabled women to maintain paid work, this was not the case in many other settings. While the issue of cost is a reality for smaller employers, the reality is that many accommodations cost relatively little. Changes to physical plant and work environments can be costly, but changes to scheduling, work routines and the division of labour among a team of employees may cost very little in financial terms. Employers may be reluctant to provide these kinds of changes because they challenge the prevailing organizational culture. In other words, they would require employers to give up some of their flexibility.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has helped to define how employers conceptualize the characteristics of the 'ideal' service worker, with particular emphasis placed on personality, physical appearance, strength and stamina, pace of work teamwork and time-management. The valuing of these characteristics raise difficult questions about (1) the extent to which the workplaces and organizational cultures continue to be underlain by an assumption of 'able-bodiedness' and (2) the implications of this assumption for disabled workers who do not demonstrate the appropriate characteristics. The chapter has also demonstrated that the

valuing of these characteristics makes some employers reluctant to look past the stereotypical views of disabled people and allow disabled workers into the paid workforce. At the same time, other employers are willing to hire disabled people, but in some instances this is motivated by a desire to help out less fortunate people. While this motive is not inherently negative, when coupled with a concern for positive public relations and/or wage subsidies, it raises concerns about the overall outcome of such arrangements. In addition, some employers see disabled workers as attractive because they are less likely to cause 'problems' and more likely to be grateful for work. In sectors subject to downgrading, this raises the possibility that disabled people – particularly those with learning disabilities – will be subject to exploitation. Finally, some employers provide meaningful accommodation to disabled people. While this appears to be more likely to occur in the public and for-profit sectors, examples from for-profit employers suggest that it can be used to create openings for disabled people.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary of Research

How disabled women experience work

There is often a fundamental disconnect between what many employers are looking for in a worker and what the women interviewed were able to offer while at work. This disconnect is typically not the product of an inherent limitation caused by impairment, but is produced by what Moss and Dyck call 'bodies in context'. The context in this instance is made up of contemporary service workplaces and labour processes.

Each woman interviewed had unique experiences while at work, although some common themes emerged from the analysis. First, employment relations were not always ideal for the women interviewed. Because of the shift in the nature of work, flexibility was an issue, as numerical flexibility was primarily seen as a tool that benefited employers, not the women interviewed. Although there were some examples where flexibility worked for both the employer and the worker, the women perceived that they were negatively singled out due to their disability, and that employers believed that they would need to be more flexible with the women interviewed in part because of their disability. Furthermore, some of the women said that they needed some flexibility while at work, in order to remain effective. Through the women's

experiences, this type of flexibility – for example, getting up and stretching, taking short breaks, etc – was not always offered. In some instances, women were reluctant to ask for flexibility from their employers, electing instead to work through their discomfort because they feared the negative repercussions of asking employers. Training was also seen as source of stress for some of the women interviewed. Because of the nature of work in the service sector, several women experienced a workplace where employers want their workers to be ready to work as soon as possible. For a number of the women interviewed, this was simply not possible, extra time was needed in order for them to understand what their responsibilities and tasks were, however they were thrown into work unclear and unready to perform up to par.

Moving on to the labour process, the women also indicated that they are aware of certain qualities that employers are looking for in an ideal employee, which produces a tension between what employers want and what these women can sometimes give. Often, they must attempt to approximate the ideal, which is implicitly able-bodied. While many women have developed ways to cope with the added stress of attempting to 'act' like the ideal employee, these strategies can in some circumstances lead workers to over-extend themselves. Performance, both emotional and embodied was seen as another obstacle for some of the women interviewed. It became clear that emotional labour was more of a problem for the women with psychiatric and learning disabilities. For the most part, these women were conscious of what is expected of them while at work,

however, at times, the degree of performance was overwhelming. Bodywork was found difficult for some of the physically disabled women as well. These women were aware that they did not look like the 'typical' employee, nor were they able to carry themselves the way that the employers wanted. The women were aware that employers expected them to carry themselves a specific way, and in some instances, the women were not able to approximate what the employers expected.

Demands for speed were also a concern for many of the women interviewed. Because of the nature of service work, the women saw the emphasis placed on speed by employers. This creates problems for all types of employment – from cleaning work, to healthcare, to retail service and restaurant workers. Time restrictions were placed on several women, and the women struggled in order to keep up the required pace. Because workers are required to work at such a fast pace, they may not do as well as they could or should. Yet the emphasis typically remains on completing the task quickly, rather than on valuing the quality of work.

Multi-tasking and teamwork, another form of flexibility was concerning for some of the women interviewed. Because they are expected to work in all areas, the responsibilities for the women are increased and some of the duties may not fit with what the women are able to do. Today's employers expect a great deal from their workers, and for certain women interviewed, that can create problems. In such cases, a little extra help can be seen as an accommodation for these

women, as they would not be able to meet the requirements of the job without some help.

Coping mechanisms were set up by the women in order to attempt to act like the ideal worker. Some women internalized their inabilities, having direct consequences with their self-esteem. Other women decide to work to the best of their abilities, in order to attempt to approximate the ideal worker. A few women opted to work unpaid overtime in order to accomplish what needed to get done at work. Another coping mechanism for the women was to ask for accommodations from their employers. Also, women found ways to get around tasks so that they would not have to perform some things, while still looking like they are working efficiently and effectively. Finally, it was found that some women interviewed simply would not apply for jobs where they knew they would not be able to perform up to par. These strategies allowed the women to continue to work, while managing their disability. Clearly, some coping strategies were more effective than others in terms of safeguarding the women's own well-being. At the same time, the women faced the pressure of doing whatever was needed in order for them to keep their jobs.

It was also noted that the women had a great amount of extra work to do while at work. For the women whom opted to inform people at work about their impairment, there was extra work done by the women in order to explain what was 'wrong', and what needed to be done for the women in order to level the playing field. This process involved employers, supervisors and co-workers, and

much of the burden was placed on the disabled women, to explain what needed to be done in order to accommodate their needs. This coincides with the results of recent work by Church et al (2005) in the context of the banking sector.

Thinking of accommodations, the women interviewed with visible and non-visible disabilities have different experiences. Women with visible disabilities are faced with the question of whether or not to ask for accommodations. Women with non-visible disabilities have two options. If they conceal their disabilities, they cannot ask or receive accommodations, however if they reveal their disabilities they are able to ask for accommodations. The outcome of this is twofold – if workers reveal their disability they can be hired with accommodations or not hired, while those who do not reveal are hired but with problems later on. Accommodations for the women interviewed were often needed, but several women chose not to ask for help, as they feared losing their job. This was particularly the case for women with psychiatric disabilities, suggesting that concerns about stigma in the workplace remain strong.

Employer's experiences with disabled workers

Perhaps not surprisingly, the employer's statements mirrored for the most part the experiences of the disabled women. The employers' comments on the construction of the ideal worker produced several themes. Flexibility was important, and several employers stated that they needed workers to work undesirable shifts, often on weekends and evenings in order to accommodate the

store hours. Some employers seemed to have a difficult time finding workers willing to work these unconventional shifts – especially Sundays. Additionally, because of the lack of guaranteed hours, some employers struggled to keep staff. It was seen that employers expect a great deal more flexibility from their workers than what they, as employers, were willing to give. Casual work was also a concept that employers tried to make-work to their advantage. With the lack of guaranteed hours, many employers found that it was difficult to find workers to agree to work casually.

Moving on to the labour process and the performance of work, many employers are looking for the same thing in their workers. For the most part employers are looking for workers to be 'well put together'. Personality however is more complex. What employers are looking for in terms of personality differs across different types of service work. For example: a retail or restaurant atmosphere, employers are primarily looking for workers who are outgoing, and energetic. On the other hand, when looking at the care taking and cleaning industry, employers would prefer workers who were generally more reserved. In many service jobs, a large component of worker duties involve public interaction, which in short, demands appropriate emotional work. Education and skills are no longer the most important qualification, as long as they have an outgoing personality, and are 'well put together'. Both of these, however, are forms of emotional labour extracted from workers. Performance skills are becoming more important than skills and training in certain areas of service work. Because of

this, the expectations of workers to look and act a specific way translate to a large amount of added effort over and above specific job descriptions. In terms of physical appearance, and bodywork, several themes materialized. Employers preferred workers to be 'clean cut', well presented, well dressed and professional. Again, adding to the embodied performances, workers must always look the part, as well as look how the company wants to be represented.

Speed was an important theme, where virtually every employer placed a strong demand for workers to maintain a certain pace while at work. In some instances technology has helped to speed up the pace of work, and in other instances, technology helped to police workers and record how fast they are working. Overall, employers require workers to work fast and efficiently as a priority.

Another important theme that was mentioned by several employers was teamwork and adaptive flexibility. Employers are increasingly implementing teamwork as a tool to improve productivity, as well as blur the job descriptions, making everyone responsible for everything that needs to be accomplished in the store, on their shift. This makes it easier for employers to move workers from department to department if need be. Furthermore, with everyone able to work in all departments, this allows employers to get away with hiring less staff because there are no longer areas that are job specific and no specialized training is required.

Based on the employer's statements about hiring and working with disabled workers, five overlapping themes were identified in how employers described their willingness to hire and accommodate disabled workers. First, the theme, 'not in this line of work', simply stated that there were certain aspects of the job requirements that would prevent them from hiring a disabled worker. Here, it was found that employers often stereotype certain disabilities and form negative attitudes towards people with certain conditions. Because of this, it makes it more difficult for people with particular conditions to acquire employment, because they are not given a chance based upon their disability. The second theme was labelled 'everyone is equal'. This theme was based on hiring candidates looking at skill sets and qualifications alone. The assumption of a level playing field allows employers to eliminate workers' (those who do not have the qualifications), from the job pool, and employers have an excuse to fall back on if they are ever confronted on why certain individuals have received the job over others. The third theme, 'charity and compassion', discussed how employers would hire a worker out of compassion, and this was often related to the experiences of those with learning or intellectual disabilities. Some employers felt that they benefited from hiring a disabled worker, as they looked progressive and concerned with the broader well-being of the community. The fourth theme was labelled 'opportunities for exploitation'. This is where employers hired disabled workers strictly for their own benefit, to make the company look better, or to take advantage of 'docile' workers in order to push

productivity limits and maximize profits. Finally, the fifth theme concerned meaningful accommodation. Here employers were aware of, and tried to make good on, their responsibility for providing meaningful accommodations to disabled workers. It is significant that instances of meaningful accommodation tended to be disproportionately concentrated in the public and non-profit sectors.

6.2 Significance of the Research

Conceptual significance

Notwithstanding some positive experiences found, it can be suggested that both data sets point to the enduring norms of able-bodiedness in the workplace, as well as the ways in which recent changes to the welfare state have exacerbated the situation. Because of the recent changes made to the welfare state, many disabled women need to find work. This study has shown that the women are not always able to approximate what the employers construct as the ideal worker, however the women have created various coping strategies in order to best approximate the ideal. The type of emotional, embodied work that is required by the majority of the employers in the service sector can be physically and emotionally draining for women with disabilities. Because these women do not fit into what the employers believe is the ideal worker, they must work twice as hard, in order to fit the ideal, as well as perform emotionally. For women with physical disabilities, bodywork is challenging, as their bodies are physically different from the 'normal' body. This makes it harder for the women to perform up to the

requirements of the employers, because if they are able to perform the task, they will look different while performing. For women with learning and psychiatric disabilities, 'appropriate' emotional performance can be difficult. We have seen that these women struggle with always having to look the part, and acting the way employers expect. Strategies used by the women allow them to approximate the ideal, but at a cost, both mentally and physically. There is a need to change the concept of the ideal worker in order to recognize that the ideal worker can look and work differently than what employers previously found.

Thinking back to Dyck and Moss' (2002) concept of 'bodies in context', this research further suggests that different bodies experience different outcomes in different situations. The women interviewed made it clear that they experience their bodies differently at work than they would at home, because of the demanding nature of service work and the performative, emotional nature of their work. It is important to recognize that there is a discrepancy in how the women act while at work compared to how they act under different circumstances. At the same time, the positive experiences of a small number of women in this study point to the sometimes quite small changes that are required to make workplaces 'enabling'. The 'give-and-take' relationship between worker and employer recounted by Audrey, for example, allowed a woman with both psychiatric condition and chronic physical illness to be a *productive* employee under conditions that accounted for the specific challenges of her impairments. While obviously not all employees can work from home, this and other examples

suggest that innovative thinking about that nature of work could have significant positive impacts on women like the respondents in this study.

Policy significance

This study has numerous policy implications. The first implication deals with the concept of meaningful and enabling accommodations. The women are working but often not in appropriate conditions. If employers were more willing to provide meaningful accommodations, perhaps employee retention rates would increase. There is a need to broaden and enforce the concept of meaningful accommodations in order to allow for more women with disabilities access into the paid workforce. By providing meaningful accommodations, employers would be giving disabled workers more chance at succeeding in the workplace, as they will be on an equal playing field with their able-bodied counterparts. In addition, when examining the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (O.D.A), the onus is on the disabled worker to seek out accommodations. Under human rights legislation, if an employer does not provide accommodations, the disabled worker is responsible to report the employer. This process can be intimidating and lengthy for the people attempting to gain work. Also, when looking at accommodations another question that needs to be addressed is: what is an appropriate accommodation in jobs requiring emotional labour? In this way, the essential duties of service work are brought into question; as workers can argue that the essential duties would be to serve the clients, not to 'perform' while serving. On

the other hand employers can make the argument that the performance aspect of service work is an essential duty for the position.

Second, what needs to be addressed is how employers hire workers.

There is a need to change hiring policies, so that stereotypes are avoided during the hiring process. Negative stereotypes implicit or not affect the way that employers hire new staff. This has implications for people with disabilities, as they constantly have to prove that they are just as capable to perform the required tasks. Training policies also need to be looked at, in order to ensure that every worker feels comfortable before they start to work. Without adequate training, workers are being set up to fail, which can create more stress for the workers. Some of the women stated that all they ask is for employers to give them a 'chance'. With that said, looking at current hiring practices of the employers interviewed, the process is complex. Interviews are common, and some employers require multiple interviews in order for the applicants to be successful in obtaining work. As reflected in the interviews with the disabled women, it was noted that the questions asked during the interviews were not realistic for the positions that they were applying for, (where do you see yourself in five years), as the women just wanted to work. A possible solution to this problem could be to reverse the process; by training potential employees first, and then follow up with an interview once the training process is complete. This would allow for potential employees to be adequately trained before the employer has to make the decision to hire. This would effectively level the playing field for

many applicants, allow applicants to become comfortable with the work, and give them the opportunity to prove themselves to potential employers.

Third, we have seen that some of the women are in precarious positions in the labour market and the majority of the women have difficulties keeping a job for a long period of time. Employers stated that they had problems with high turnover rates, which could be partly because of the nature of service work, and how the women burn out after some time. Studies have shown that burnout is becoming more and more common in workers however, for the women interviewed, burnout may come earlier, as they must manage their disability with their employment. Embodied work is physically and mentally draining, and for the women interviewed, they have to work harder to attempt to approximate the ideal worker, expected by the employers. Because not all of the women ask for accommodations, they strategize in order to perform as best as they can. For the most part, it was seen that eventually the women interviewed lost their jobs, or quit because it was too much for them to handle. There is a need to challenge the way employers look at disabled workers in order for disabled workers to gain and maintain stable employment. In order to do so, there is a need for employers to be more open minded about the definition of embodied work, and allow for different methods to be used in the workplace. By this, the routinization and orders of service should be more lenient, in order to make them easier to follow. With lower amounts of emphasis place on following strict rules of interaction,

perhaps workers in the service sector would manage to keep their jobs for longer periods of time.

6.3 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

One limitation found is that for the most part this study focused on employment at the lower end of the labour market. Because of this, I may have painted a rather bleak picture for disabled women attempting to negotiate how to gain and maintain paid work. Furthermore, the situation could be very different higher up in the labour market, or even in another sector of the economy. Perhaps looking at jobs higher up in the labour market, the results found will differ from what was found in this study.

Furthermore, this research is geographically specific. Hamilton, Ontario has a distinct labour market, relying greatly on industry. Because of this, the results of the study are based solely on what was found in Hamilton, which may not hold true in other cities. Again, if this research looked at another city, the results may differ greatly.

From this research, there are numerous opportunities for future research. First, a larger scale study looking at how disabled women negotiate gaining and maintaining paid work will help to see trends across Canada. Second, one could study different sectors in the labour market and compare and contrast the demands faced on disabled women in different areas of the economy. Third, a study comparing the differences between how disabled men and women

negotiate their way through paid employment within the service sector could strengthen this research as well.

REFERENCE LIST

- Acker, J. (1990). "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations". *Gender and Society* 4:139-158.
- Barbotte, E et al. (2001) "Prevalence of impairments, disabilities, handicaps and quality of life in the general population: a review of recent literature." *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 79(11): 1047-1055.
- Barker, K., Christensen, K. (1998). Contingent Work: American Employment Relations in Transition. Ithaca, New York: ILR Press.
- Barnartt S. & Altman, B. M. (1997). "Predictors of Wages: Comparisons by Gender and Type of Impairment" *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*. 8(1 &2): 51-73.
- Barnes, C. (1991). Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination: A Case For Anti-discrimination Legislation. London: Hurst & Company in association with the British Council of Organizations of Disabled People.
- Barnes, C. et al. (1999). Exploring Disability: A Sociological Introduction. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Baron et al. (1998). "The Best Burgers? The Person with Learning Difficulties as Worker". In The Disability Reader: Social Science Perspectives. Shakespeare, T. (Ed). London: Cassell.
- Blackford, K. A. (1993). "Erasing mothers with disabilities through Canadian family-related policy". *Disability, Handicap and Society* 8(3): 281-294.
- Boydell, K., Gladstone, B., Crawford, E. and Trainor, J. (1999). "Making do on the outside: everyday life in the neighbourhoods of people with psychiatric disabilities". *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 23: 11-18.
- Butler R. & Bowlby, S. (1997). "Bodies and spaces: an exploration of disabled people's experiences of public space" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 15: 411-433.
- Canadian Council on Social Development. (2004). "Workers with Disabilities and the Impact of Workplace Structures". *CCSD's Disability information sheet* No.16. Social Development Canada.

- Capponi, P. (1984). The War at Home: An Intimate Portrait of Canada's Poor. Toronto: Viking.
- Chouinard, Vera. (1999). "Body Politics: disabled women's activism in Canada and beyond" Mind and Body Spaces. Butler & Parr (Eds). London: Routledge.
- Church, K., Luciani, T. (2005). "Dancing Lessons: A Choreography of Disability in Corporate Culture". (Forthcoming).
- Clear, M & Gleeson, B. (2002). "Disability and Materialist Embodiment" *Journal of Australian Political Economy* **49**: 34-55.
- Cornes, P. (1984). The Future of Work for People with Disabilities. New York: World Rehabilitation Fund.
- Cranford, C. (1998). "Gender and citizenship in the Restructuring of Janitorial Work in Los Angeles". *Gender Issues* **16**(4): 25-51
- Cranford, C et al. (2003). "The Gender of Precarious Employment in Canada". *Industrial Relations* **58**: p. 454-471.
- Cranford, C. (2005) "Networks of Exploitation: Immigrant Labour and the Restructuring of the Los Angeles Janitorial Industry". *Social Problems* **52**(3).
- Crang, Philip (1994). "It's Showtime: on the workplace geographies of display in restaurants in southeast England" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **12**: 675 – 704
- Crow, L. (1996) "Including all of our Lives: Renewing the Social Model of Disability" Encounters with Strangers: Feminism and Disability. Morris (Ed). London: Women's Press.
- Dear et al. (1997). "Seeing People Differently: The Sociospatial Construction of Disability" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **15**: 455-480.
- Despouy, L. (1993). "Human Rights and Disabled Persons". Geneve and New York: United Nations.
- Domosh, M. (1996) "Feminism and Human Geography" Concepts in Human Geography Mathewson, E. K. & Kenzer, M. S. (Eds). USA: Rowan & Littlefield, pp. 411-428.

- Domosh M. and Seager J. (2001). *The City in Putting women in place: Feminist geographers make sense of the world* London: The Guilford Press, 67-94.
- Dorn, M. and Laws, G. (1994). " Social theory, body politics, and medical geography: extending Kearns' invitation". *The Professional Geographer* **46**: 106-110.
- Drum, C. E. (1998) "The Social Construction of Personnel Policy: implications for people with disability" *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*. **9**(1): 125-150.
- Dyck, Isabel, (1995) "Hidden Geographies: The Changing Lifeworlds of Women With Multiple Sclerosis" *Social Science Medicine*. **40**(3): 307-320.
- Dyck, Isabel. (1999) "Body Troubles: Women, the Workplace and Negotiations of a Disabled Identity" Mind and Body Spaces. Butler & Parr (Eds). London: Routledge.
- England, Kim. (2003) "Disabilities, Gender and Employment: Social exclusion, employment equity and Canadian banking" *The Canadian Geographer*. **47**(4): 429-450.
- Farina, A., Felner, R. (1973). "Employment Interviewer Relations to Former Medical Patients". *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* **82**.
- Fawcett, G. (1996). "Living With Disability in Canada: An Economic Portrait" Hull, Quebec: HRDC Office for Disability Issues.
- Fawcett, B (2000) Feminist Perspectives on Disability. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Finklestein, V. (1980). Attitudes and Disabled People. New York: World Rehabilitation Fund.
- Finnegan et al. (1987). Information Technology: Social Issues. Bungay: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Fowler, F. (1993). Survey Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fuqua, D. et al. (1984). "A Comparison of Employer Attitudes Toward the Worker Problems of Eight Types of Disabled Workers". *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*. **15**.

- Gleeson, B. (1999). Geographies Of Disability. London: Routledge.
- Gooding, C. (1994). Disabling Laws, Enabling Acts: Disability Rights In Britain and America. London: Pluto Press.
- Hall, Edward. (1999). "Workspaces: Refiguring the Disability-Employment Debate" in Mind and Body Spaces. Butler & Parr (Eds). London: Routledge.
- Hall, E. (2004). "Social Geographies of learning disability: Narratives of exclusion and inclusion". *Area* **36**(3): 298-306.
- Harlan, S & Robert, P. (1998). "The Social Construction of Disability in Organizations: Why Employers Resist Reasonable Accommodation". *Work and Occupations* **25**(4): 397-435.
- Hendriks, A. (1999). "From Social (in)security to Equal Employment Opportunities: A Report from the Netherlands". In *Disability Divers-ability and Legal Change*. Jones, M. & Basser Marks, L. (eds). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Hiebert, D. (1999). Local Geographies of Labor Market Segmentation: Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. *Economic Geography* **75**.
- Hochschild, A.R. (1983). The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling. Los Angeles: University of California Press, Ltd.
- Hoggart et al. (2002). "Close encounters: interviews and focus groups". In Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers. Limb & Dwyer [Eds].
- Human Resources Development Canada (No Date). Industrial Structure of the Hamilton Labour Market. <http://www.on.hrdc-drhc.gc/english/offices/hamilton/lmi/content> [online] accessed April 2003.
- Human Resources Development Canada. (1999). Employment Equity Act: Annual Report. Hull, Quebec: Human Resources Development Canada.
- Imrie, Rob. (1996). Disability and the City: International Perspectives. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, Ltd.
- Jackson, C. J. et al. (2000) "Employer willingness to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act regarding staff selection in the UK" *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* **73**: 119–129.

- Johnson, Janice. (2004). "Flexible Working: changing the managers role"
Management Decision **42**(6): 721-737.
- Kitchin, Rob. (1998). "'Out of Place', 'Knowing Ones Place': space, power and the exclusion of disabled people" *Disability & Society* **13**(3): 343-356.
- Kitchin, et al. (1998). "On the Margins: Disabled Peoples Experience of Employment in Donegal, West Ireland" *Disability & Society* **13**(5): 785-806.
- Krahn, H. (2001). "Social Stratification". In *New Society: Sociology for the 21st Century, Third Edition* Brym, R. (Ed). Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 146-174.
- Krahn, H & Lowe, G. (2002). Work Industry and Canadian Society. Scarborough: Thomson Nelson.
- Laws, G., & Radford, J. (1998). "Place, identity and disability: Narratives of intellectually disabled people in Toronto" In Putting health into place: Landscape, Identity and Well-being R. Kearns & W. Gesler (Eds.) 77-101, Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Leidner, R. (1991). "Serving Hamburgers and Selling Insurance: Gender, Work and Identity in Interactive Service Jobs". *Gender and Society* **5**: 154-177.
- Linton, S. (1998). Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity. New York: New York University Press. 9-13.
- Lunt N. & Thornton, P. (1994). "Disability and Employment: Towards an understanding of discourse and policy" *Disability & Society* **9**(2): 223-238.
- Luxton M. and Corman J. (2001). Getting by in hard times: gendered labour at home and on the job. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Marks, Deborah. (1999). "Dimensions of Oppression: theorizing the embodied subject" *Disability & Society* **14**(5): 611-626.
- McDowell, L. (1997). "A Tale of Two Cities? Embedded Organizations and Embodied Workers in the City of London". In Geographies of Economies. Lee, R. & Wills, J. (Eds). Arnold, London.
- McDowell, L. (2001). "Father Ford Revisited: gender, class and employment change in the new millennium". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. **26**:4 448-464.

- McDowell, L. & Court, G. (1994). "Performing Work: Bodily representations in Merchant Banks" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **12**: 727-750.
- Morris, J. (1990). Pride Against Prejudice: Transforming Attitudes to Disability. London: The Women's Press.
- Moss, P. & Dyck, I. (2002). Women, Body, Illness: Space and Identity in the Everyday Lives of Women With Chronic Illness. USA: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Nickson et al. (2005). "The importance of attitude and appearance in the service encounter in retail and hospitality" *Managing Service Quality* **15**(2): 195-208.
- Norden, Martin. (1996). The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Oliver, M. (1990). The Politics of Disablement. London: MacMillan Education.
- Oliver, M. (1996). Understanding Disability: From Theory To Practice. New York. St.Martin's Press, Scholarly and Reference Division.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. 2nd Edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Perrons, D. (2000). "Flexible Working and equal opportunities in the United Kingdom: a case study from retail." *Environment and Planning A* **32**: 1719-1734.
- Perrons, Diane. (2002) "Gendered divisions in the new economy: Risks and opportunities". *GeoJournal* **56**(4): 271-280.
- Pratt, G. (1998). "Inscribing domestic work on Filipina bodies" in Places through the Body. Phile, S. & Nast, H. [Eds]. Vancouver.
- Ravaud et al. (1992). "Discrimination Towards Disabled People Seeking Employment". *Social Science and Medicine* **35**: 951.
- Reid, P. M. and Bray, A. (1998). "Real jobs: The perspectives of workers with learning difficulties". *Disability and Society* **13**: 229-239.

- Reiter E. (1996). Making Fast Food: From the Frying Pan into the Fryer. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Ritzer, G. (1993). The MacDonaldisation of Society: an introduction into the changing character of contemporary life. California: Pine Forge Press.
- Robert, Pamela. (2003). "Disability Oppression in the Contemporary U.S. Capitalist Workplace" *Science & Society* 67(2): 136-159.
- Rodgers, G. (1989). "Precarious Work in Western Europe: The State of the Debate". In Precarious Jobs in Labour Market Regulation: The Growth of Atypical Employment in Western Europe. Rodgers, G. & Rodgers J. (Eds). Brussels: International Institute for Labour Studies.
- Roulstone, A. (2000). "Disability, Dependency and the New Deal for Disabled People" *Disability & Society*. 15(3): 427-443.
- Roulstone, A. (2002). "Disabling Pasts, Enabling Futures? How does the Changing Nature of Capitalism Impact on the Disabled Worker and Jobseeker?" *Disability & Society* 17(6): 627-642.
- Russell, M. (1998). Beyond Ramps: Disability at the End of the Social Contract. New York: Vintage Press.
- Seymour, D. (2000). "Emotional labour: a comparison between fast food and traditional service work". *Hospitality Management* 19: 159-171
- Shakespeare, T. (1999). "What is a Disabled Person" in Disability, Diversity and Legal Change. Jones M & Basser Marks, L.A. (eds). Great Britain: Kluwer Law International. Chapter 2, pp. 25-34.
- Shakespeare T. (1994). "Cultural Representation of Disabled People: Dustbins for Disavowal?" *Disability and Society*, 9(3).
- Smith, V. (1998). "The Fractured World of the Temporary Worker: Power Participation and Fragmentation in the Contemporary Workplace" *Social Problems* 45(4): 411-430.
- Smith, V. (2001). Crossing the great divide: Worker risk and opportunity in the new economy. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Statistics Canada. (1991). "Adults with Disabilities, their Employment and Education Characteristics" [Online] Available at:
<http://www.statcan.ca:8096/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=82-554-X>.
- Steward, B. (1996). "Unemployment and health 2: The implications of unemployment for therapy and rehabilitation". *British Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation* 3: 426-427, 445-447
- Stevens, G. (2002). "Employers Perceptions and Practice in the Employability of Disabled People: A survey of companies in south-east UK" *Disability and Society* 17(7): 779-796.
- Thomas, C. (1999). "Defining Disability: The Social Model" Female Forms: Experiencing and Understanding Disability. Open University Press.
- Thomson, R. (1997). "Theorizing Disability" Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature. Chapter 2. Columbia University Press, New York
- Torjman, S. (1997). "Welfare Warfare" Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy [online] Available at: www.caledoninst.org (Accessed Mar 2004).
- Torjman, Sherri. (2001). "Canada's Federal Regime and Persons with Disabilities" Disability and Federalism: Comparing Different Approaches to Full Participation, Cameron, D & Valentine, F. (eds). Montreal & Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University.
- Tregaskis, Claire. (2002). "Social Model Theory: the story so far..." *Disability & Society* 17(4): 457-470.
- Vosko, L. (2000). Temporary Work: The Gendered Rise of a Precarious Employment Relationship. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Wahl, O. (1999). "Mental Health Consumers' Experience of Stigma". *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 25.
- Wilgosh, L.R & Skaret, D. (1987). "Employer Attitudes Towards Hiring Individuals With Disabilities: A Review of the Recent Literature" *Canadian Journal of Rehabilitation*. 1(2): 89-98.
- Wolkowitz, C. (2002). "The social relations of body work" *Work, Employment and Society*. 16(3): 497-510.

- World Health Organization. (2002). "Towards a Common Language for Functioning, Disability and Health: ICF, The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health". Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Young, L, M. (1990). Justice and the Politics of Difference. Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Wilton, R. (2004). "From flexibility to accommodation? Disabled people and the reinvention of paid work". *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* new series **29**: 420-432.

APPENDIX A

Employee/person with disability interview guide (themes and selected sample questions)

- Decisions to enter and/or leave labour force
 - Can you tell me when you first started (looking for) paid employment?
 - How old were you?
 - Why then?
 - How long did it take you to find a job?
 - *For those people no longer in the labour market* – when did you stop (looking for) paid work?
 - Why then?
- Work history (including unpaid and volunteer)
 - *If working* – opinion about current position
 - How satisfied are you with your current job? (probe – wages, security, prospect, etc)
 - If not satisfied, what kind of position would you like to be in?
 - Are you qualified for that type of work right now?
 - If not, what would it take to get qualified?
 - *If looking for work* – ideally what kind of job would like right now?
 - How does that compare with the kind of job you expect to find?
 - How would you describe the job market right now?
- Perceived barriers to finding a job
 - Can you think of any obstacles that you encountered during your job search/es?
 - What were they?
 - (Probe – concerns about losing benefits, issues of transportation, other things that may have got in the way of finding a job)

- Which if any of those obstacles do you think were related to your disability?
- Can you explain how?
- How did you deal with them situations?
- Which if any of those problems were been related to other issues?
- Please explain
- How did you deal with them situations?
- Can you think of things that helped you when you were looking for work? (were there any resources or people that made things easier?)
- Was any of this assistance specifically concerned with disability?
- Experience with employers
 - Based on your own experiences, how would you characterize the attitudes of employers/managers when it comes to hiring someone with a disability?
 - What's your opinion based on/can you provide some examples?
 - Why do you think those employers behaved that way/expressed those attitudes?
 - How did you try to deal with that situation?
- Experiences at work/relationships on the job
 - Does/did your disability make a difference to your relationship with your boss/co-workers?
 - Can you explain in what ways?
 - How did you deal with that?
 - Do you think your boss' views about you/your disability changed over time?
 - In what ways? (probe for evidence)
 - Did your co-workers attitudes about you/your disability changed over time?

- In what ways? (probe for evidence)
- Were there other people with disabilities at that workplace?
- Workplace accessibility and accommodation
 - In the job(s) you've had, was it necessary for the companies to make changes to the workplace or the to facilitate access and accommodation
 - Did you have to ask for these or were they offered?
 - Have there been situations where access and accommodation would have helped, but you didn't request/receive them?
 - Can you explain why?
 - What were some of the costs/benefits of not having changes?
 - What were some of the costs/benefits of those changes?
 - (cost -- other people saw it as preferential treatment?)
 - In your view, how did your employers view these accommodations?
- Negotiating invisible and/or undisclosed disability at work
 - Can you tell me why you decided not to tell your employer about your disability?
 - Was it difficult to come to that decision?
 - Was it at all difficult to keep your disability undisclosed?
 - Were there specific strategies you used at work to keep the disability a secret?
 - What effects did not telling people have on your experience at work?
 - What effects did it have on you as a person?
 - For people who disclosed at a later date – what made you decide to tell your employer about your disability?
 - What was the reaction of your employer/manager?
 - What about your co-workers?

- What impact did the disclosure have on your job/your ability to perform your job?
 - What impact did it have on you?
- Knowledge/opinions about employment equity/ODA legislation
 - In your opinion, what's the most appropriate way to create job opportunities for persons with disabilities?
 - What about provincial employment equity legislation to create job opportunities for disabled people?
- Socio-demographic information (education, age, gender, disability, etc.)

APPENDIX B

Employer Interview guide

Section One

Nature of workplace/workforce

Can you tell me a little about the firm?

When was it established?

What areas of _____ do you specialize in?

How many employees do you currently have?

Has that changed much in the last five years or so?

What are the reasons for those changes?

Roughly what proportion of your workforce is permanent full-time?

- Do you employ a lot of Part-time
- Seasonal
- Casual
- Temporary

Have the characteristics of your workforce changed over the last five years or so?

Does your company ever use a temporary agency to find workers?

Is that a recent development?

Can you tell me what the starting salary for entry level positions would be?

Can you tell me roughly what proportion of your workforce is male?

Is any of your workforce unionized?

Does your company offer benefits?

- Who qualifies for them?

With regard to employee retention rates, can you tell me roughly how long employees stay at your firm?

Section Two

Interviews and Résumés

When you are hiring, where do you advertise your positions available?

- Probe: employment services, internet, newspapers

What are the positions that you have been most recently hiring for?

Thinking about those positions specifically, can you tell me what skills / qualifications you look for in an applicant?

- Entry level, specialized, education, training, etc.

Aside from these skills / qualities, what else do you think makes a good candidate?

Probe – can you explain that a bit?

Can you give me a sense of how your hiring process works? (Ask the next set of questions accordingly).

Looking through résumés, how do you select out people for interviews?

For the positions you've been hiring most recently, roughly how many résumés did you receive and how many people got interviews?

During an interview, what types of questions do you ask potential employees?

What are you looking for when you are interviewing a candidate?

Once you've hired a new employee, what happens next? For example is there a period of training?

- Job training
 - How long does it take to train new employees?
 - Is there flexibility in that time frame?

And/or are most workers hired for a probationary period to begin with?

- Probation
 - How is the progress of new employees monitored?
 - What constitutes satisfactory progress?

Overall, what do you see as the biggest challenge in finding suitable employees for your firm?

Section Three:

Definitions of 'disability'

Now I'd like to change the focus of the interview a little. I'd like to ask you some questions about disability.

When you hear the term disability, what comes to mind?

Can you explain why that one/those came to mind?

Are there other conditions that you think of when you hear the term disability?

- Physical,
- Psychiatric
- Learning
- Developmental

Views about hiring disabled persons/perceived barriers to employment

As someone involved in hiring employees, can you think of concerns you might have about hiring someone with any of the disabilities we've just talked about?

- Access
- Accommodation, any additional equipment provided, flexible schedule?
- Anything else you can think of?

Can you think of any benefits of hiring someone with a disability?

Have you had any experience hiring or managing an employee with a disability?

Section Four A: For those who have hired disabled persons only

Experience hiring and working with disabled persons

Can you tell me about that experience?

- Did you have any initial concerns?
- How did the person work out?
- How long at the firm?

Sometimes workplaces and work schedules have to be modified in order for a disabled person to take the job.

Thinking back to the experience with _____, were any changes made to the workplace or work schedule to accommodate that person?

- What were they? (Flexible schedules, time off, longer training, etc.)
- When/why were they made?
- What impact did they have?
- Did you have any concerns about that?
- Was there any kind of cost involved...?

In terms of the social environment at work, did hiring a disabled person affect this?

- Employees reactions to accommodations made for the person with a disability
- Does the disabled person fit in socially?
- How was this person introduced to the others in the workplace?

Overall, do you think your experiences with _____ have made you more/less willing to hire another person with a disability?

Can you explain that a bit?

Do you think that there are jobs in your company that wouldn't be well suited for a disabled person?

Section Four B: For those who have not hired disabled people

Have you had experience interviewing someone with a disability that you can remember?

Do you remember what the specific disabilities were?

Sometimes workplaces and work schedules have to be modified in order for a disabled person to take the job

If you hired someone with a disability could you foresee any difficulties in accommodating that person in the kinds of jobs that we were talking about earlier?

- What would they be?
- When or why would they be made?
- What impact would they have?
- What kind of costs would be incurred?

Are there jobs in your company that wouldn't be well suited for a disabled person?

Thinking about employee relationships, how do you think having a disabled employee would affect the social aspect of your firm?

Section Five: For all respondents

Accommodations

We are nearly done, I just have a few more general questions where I'm interested in any ideas you might have. What would you see as being the biggest challenges to getting more people with disabilities into employment?

Do you have any ideas about the most appropriate way to create job opportunities for persons with disabilities?

Given what you've told me about your company, could you see any ways to create opportunities for disabled people here?

What do you think about employment equity programs to create job opportunities for disabled people?

Are you aware of any government programs that support the hiring of disabled people?

- What programs do you know about? (Wage subsidies, funding for accommodations, job coaches)
- Have you used them?

I just have one more question, could you tell me what is your position at the firm?