

Globalisation, the market university and support service outsourcing in South Africa: class struggle, convergence and difference, 1994-2001¹

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'Globalisation' is all too often understood as a monolithic process that produces broadly similar outcomes in a wide range of settings. This examination of the impact of globalisation on the restructuring of public sector universities in South Africa in the 1990s demonstrates that the picture is far more complex. Over the last thirty years, globalisation has been intertwined with neoliberal capitalist economic and ideological restructuring. This is refracted, in the first instance, through State policy, and, in the second, through specific local sites of power relations and class struggles that are, in turn, structured by the resources and responses of different actors. While the neoliberal component of globalisation has played a decisive role in shaping State higher education policy in South Africa, the actual implementation of the model of the market-orientated university receiving minimal support from a deficit conscious State has varied considerably between universities. Using a case study of the rise of support service outsourcing in the campuses, this paper demonstrates that management capacity and labour resistance play a central role in explaining divergence in the sector. The conclusion is that local struggles play a central role in shaping the extent to which globalisation is able to shape given sites of social relations, and that globalisation is refracted through, and reproduces, existing configurations of power.

Introduction

The South African social formation has undergone two main structural changes over the last three decades. On the one hand, a shift occurred towards a neoliberal mode of capital accumulation. On the other, a liberalisation of the State system took place, culminating in non-racial parliamentary elections in April 1994 and in the adoption of an impressive Constitution with provisions for social rights in 1996. The African National Congress-domi-

1. This paper draws upon on a Sociology of Work Unit report to Centre for Higher Education Transformation entitled *The Outsourced University: a survey of the rise of support service outsourcing in public sector higher education in South Africa, and its effects on workers and trade unions, 1994-2001* (May 2002). The financial support of CHET is gratefully acknowledged. Co-ordination, planning, final data analysis and principal authorship by Lucien van der Walt, planning, initial data preparation and analysis by Chris Bolsmann and Bernadette Johnson, and planning, final data analysis by Lindsey Martin, and additional research by Shaheen Buckus, Patrick Connolly, Lindsey Martin and Papi Nkoli.

nated government that was elected in 1994 and again in 1999 has subsequently walked a policy tightrope, struggling to balance the competing and contradictory demands of accumulation by implementing unpopular economic reforms, and of legitimation by managing popular pressure for substantive social reforms by the electorate.¹

The shift towards a neoliberal macro-economic policy framework did not begin in the 1990s, but has antecedents in economic reforms introduced by the apartheid government from the late 1970s. Although successive South African governments had implemented a policy of import substitution industrialisation from 1924, neoliberal policies began to exercise increasing influence upon the apartheid government from the mid-1970s. Subsequent policy reviews advocated capital, currency, and trade liberalisation, and the 1987 *White Paper on Privatisation and Deregulation* (see Morris and Padayachee, 1988; Saul and Gelb, 1986). Contested within the State, the process of liberalisation was uneven, and the political instability of the 1980s prevented an extension and consolidation of the neoliberal programme (see Heymans, 1991).

Underpinning this shift in the 1970s was the onset of an international capitalist crisis of overaccumulation which affected South Africa through declining foreign trade and investment, and through exchange rate instability, so compounding long-term local problems of market saturation and low productivity. Economic growth rates in the main industrial countries peaked during the 'Golden Age' of capitalism from 1950 to 1973, falling thereafter. Real GDP in the West grew at 4,9 per cent from 1960 to 1973, falling to 2,6 per cent for 1979-1898, and to 1,7 per cent for 1989 to 1993. Meanwhile international trade growth fell from an annual average of 7 per cent from 1950 to 1973 to 3,7 percent between 1973 and 1992 (Moody, 1997:50-51, 65). Within this context, neoliberalism became the dominant response to the crisis. The initial Western response of 'reflation' failed, discrediting the Keynesian model. Neoliberalism, adopted in the United States and Britain in the 1980s, appeared to succeed in restoring growth. The emergence of the Third World debt crisis, the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites from 1989 onwards, and the Asian crisis of 1997 all continued the general discrediting of models of State-led growth and opened the door to neoliberalism.

At the same time, neoliberal policies converged with the interests of the dominant sector of capital internationally, namely those of the multinational corporations, which by 1993 accounted for two-thirds of the value of all exports and dominated Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Moody, 1997:46-7). The multinationals had emerged in the 'Golden Age' and grew apace in the 1970s and 1980s. They had no direct interest in nationally based growth strategies (Teepie, 1995), were driven into ever more intense competition for new markets and capital outlets by the crisis, and exercised considerable influence over policy formulation. Within South Africa, the largest conglomerates came to champion neoliberalism from the late 1970s (Saul and Gelb, 1986). Neoliberalism seemed an ideal solution to the challenges of the new period of capitalism. As a policy, it appeared to address the need for new markets and capital outlets through the promise of economic liberalisation and privatisation. Neoliberalism facilitated the promotion of corporate

1. This understanding of the functioning of the capitalist State in South Africa draws upon the path-breaking work of Yudelman (1983).

restructuring to meet the needs of the intensified competition of the period of crisis through deregulation, tax restructuring, fiscal austerity, welfare reform, and the promotion of labour market flexibility.

Against the backdrop of this crisis within the institutional nexus of increased cross-national capitalist activity and centralisation, coupled with the discrediting of State-led growth, neoliberal policies have come to wield a preponderant influence on macro-economic policy. Neoliberalism spans the First, Second and Third Worlds in a manner unprecedented by any earlier economic policy regime. Capitalist globalisation has come to be associated with neoliberal restructuring, while neoliberal policies have, in turn, fostered further economic globalisation. The accumulated stock of FDI increased five times between 1960 and 1993, reaching a total value of US\$2,1 trillion (Moody, 1997:47). However, the international shift towards neoliberalism has not eradicated differences between the world's regions, nor has neoliberalism proceeded smoothly and at a single pace. While accepted by the dominant sector of capital, its actual implementation has been profoundly shaped by class struggles from below. The significance of the rise of neoliberalism to higher education, and the impact of class struggles in this sector, will be discussed below in some depth with reference to South Africa.

Within South Africa several factors combined to undermine the older ANC vision of an interventionist State. The continuity in State structures (and in many instances personnel from the apartheid to the post-apartheid periods; Gotz, 1996); the ongoing power of local conglomerates, with their continued stress on neoliberal reform (cf. Saul and Gelb, 1986; Natrass, 1996); and the discrediting of Statist models of development all contributed to this shift. For an ANC that lacked any clear economic policies at the time of its legalisation in 1990 (Marais, 1998), international and local pressures converged with the interests of a powerful faction within the party that saw its aspirations for embourgeoisment lying within integration into the existing local capitalist class (Lehulere, 1997). In mid-1996, with the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR), the ANC consolidated its 'drifts into neo-liberalism in various areas of social, economic and political policy' (Lehulere, 1997:73-74) at the expense of its mainly African working class constituency.

Neoliberalism and the drive to constitute 'market universities' in South Africa

The ANC's difficulties in balancing accumulation with legitimisation have been particularly apparent in the post-apartheid restructuring of State-subsidised public universities in South Africa. On the one hand, the ANC has sought to 'transform' the composition of the student and staff bodies in the 21 public sector universities, and ensure that research was tied to government priorities. On the other, however, its approach to university restructuring has been moulded by neoliberal policies and thinking.

The neoliberal stress on the superior allocative ability of the market provides an ideological rationale for 'new enclosures' (Federici, 2001), that is, the commodification of new areas of social and natural life by capital. The ideological rationale is given material force by the need of the dominant sectors of local and international capital to find new outlets for

capital investment. In neoliberal discourse, universities have increasingly been reconceptualised as potentially profitable corporations and sites of investment that should be run according to private sector managerial principles and profit-making imperatives. Traditionally, universities were, at least in theory, based on the 'mode 1' knowledge production paradigm of 'pure' research driven primarily by the intellectual concerns of academics operating within the framework of university autonomy, itself underwritten by State support and a commitment to the scientific enterprise *per se*. However, an increasingly influential 'mode 2' paradigm has argued for a new research approach that is, at once, applied, transdisciplinary, team-based and located in, and funded by, different organisations (Scott *et al*, 1994, cited in Cloete and Muller, 1998:5; Webster and Mosoetsa, 2001:10). In the context of fiscal austerity, 'mode 2' research necessarily implies greater reliance upon corporate support and on other 'entrepreneurial' means of generating additional income.

In short, the university is being reconceptualised as a 'market university' suited to the production of information commodities, a lucrative market for instructional wares, and a key source of skilled personnel (Bertelsen, 1998:130-1). In Bertelsen's words (1998:141):

Once universities concede these terms, research which does not yield new products is pointless, and courses which don't feed job skills are a waste of time. Cost-efficiency requires that personnel be downsized; 'peripheral' activities are eliminated; high-tech distance learning replaces inefficient classroom contact, and funding is regarded as an investment decision based on short-term production goals.

High numbers of fee-paying students are pursued as a source of revenue; collegial decision-making processes are superseded by administrative managerialism. Decisions about academic staffing, curricula and research priorities are overdetermined by considerations of profitability and of supplementing declining State support – the consequence of fiscal austerity (Van der Walt, 2000c; 2000d; 2000e). Institutions compete for fee-paying students, as well as with one another and other research bodies for contracts (Gibbons, 1998).

GEAR's treatment of public sector higher education is cursory, but most significant (Government of National Unity, 1996:6.1). Firstly, with 'spending on education at nearly 7 per cent of GDP there is a need to contain expenditure through reductions in subsidisation of the more expensive parts of the system'. Education expenditure, like other social welfare items, is to be redirected to the creation of a safety net for those unable to access services through the market, as part of a broader programme of fiscal austerity (for more on the latter, see Van der Walt, 2000a). Secondly, GEAR argued for 'greater private sector involvement in higher education.'

Following the adoption of GEAR, subsidies to universities fell sharply, continuing a trend begun in the 1980s (Van der Walt, 2000b). The 1997/8 Budget allocation for tertiary institutions, for example, provided an average funding level of 65,6 per cent, down from 68 per cent the previous year (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1998:137). The influence of the 'market university' model has also been increasingly apparent in government policy. The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), established by presidential proclamation in December 1994, argued in 1996 for increasing student enrolments and programme offerings, and greater responsiveness to societal needs – including

market-driven modes of knowledge production and more vocationally orientated forms of training (Cloete and Muller, 1998:8-11). This approach was adopted in the 1997 *White Paper* on higher education (Department of Education, 1997) and reflected in the March 2001 'National Plan for Higher Education' (Department of Education, 2001). The National Working Group on the Restructuring of the Higher Education system added that the number of universities and technikons should be reduced from 36 to 21 through mergers to cut costs and increase efficiency (Macozoma, 2002).

Given high levels of university autonomy, the implementation of State policy devolved on individual university managements, and subsidy reductions have consequently operated as the core policy instrument for university restructuring. Under apartheid, the university system was divided along racial and ethnic lines into institutions for Whites, now known as 'Historically Advantaged Institutions' (HAIs), and those for other races, the 'Historically Disadvantaged Institutions' (HDIs). Amongst the HDIs, those catering for Africans were further divided on ethnic lines and distinguished from better-funded institutions for Indians and Coloureds (the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC), respectively; Habib and Parekh, 2001). The 'primary function of the HDIs was to train individuals for service in the segregated state institutions of apartheid South Africa and its homelands' (Habib and Parekh, 2001:3). Racially structured funding systems and student intakes, and unequal levels of staff development and training ensured that the universities were unevenly resourced and sharply distinguished by their research output, and levels of national and international recognition.

Given the HAI/ HDI divide, the emergence of public sector 'market universities' able to generate additional funding through an expansion in the number fee-paying students and through the provision of commercial research has been a process largely confined to HAIs and the two better resourced HDIs, UDW and UWC

Elite English-speaking institutions such as the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand have commercialised primarily through the expansion of for-profit research (Berteisen, 1998) and of postgraduate student numbers. Historically Afrikaans HAIs have focussed upon a massive expansion of undergraduate numbers through distance education and part-time classes. Student numbers at the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit (RAU) rose from 11,872 in 1990 to 22,011 in 1998 (Bolsmann and Uys, 2000:12), while enrolments at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PUK) in the distance education programme rose 25 per cent in 2001 alone (*Business Day*, 2001). The concomitant of this expansion has been a stricter recovery of student fees, shifting the student profile away from poorer working class – mainly African – students towards middle-class learners.

By contrast, HDIs have been generally unable to raise additional funding from student fees (given a generally poorer, and shrinking, student population (Habib and Parekh, 2001:4), and low levels of cost-recovery) or from research work (given less qualified staff and weaker research reputations). Despite an occasional rhetorical veneer of market-orientation (see Odhav, 2000)¹, HDIs have concentrated on cost cutting, departmental clo-

1. Odhav (2000) describes the wide 'gap between the ideals of the strategic plan and the actual existing conditions' at the University of the North West.

tures, and lobbying an unsympathetic government for more aid, rather than on expansion and marketisation. By mid-1999, several, including the University of Fort Hare and the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa), were facing closure or merger due to 'huge student debt, financial deficit[s] and massive cash flow problems' (Wa ka Ngobeni, 1999). Government responded by reiterating that tertiary education bodies would not receive additional resources (Asmal, 2001). The merger process which has, instead, become government's solution will effectively end the separate existence of HDIs.

From theory to practice: convergence in university restructuring

There has thus been a general trend in the HAIs to undermine traditional academic labour markets and labour processes, through increasing academic workload and policies linking employment security and remuneration to income-generating activities as well as the emergence of a second tier of academics employed on a short-term demand-driven contract basis, while HDIs have focussed, on the whole, less on expansion and marketisation than on rationalisation and simple survival.

The tendency to 'proletarianise' academic labour (Bertelsen, 1998:147) is consistent with international trends (see Bertelsen, 1998:147; Gibbons, 1998). Webster and Mosoetsa (2001) has documented this trend in South Africa, linking the process to the rise of 'academic managerialism.' Subotzky (2001:5) shows that numbers of academic staff have actually risen from 13,717 in 1994 to 14,412 in 1999. But this overall growth disguises the shifts that have taken place in academic employment; in particular, less 'sustainable' social science and humanities departments have been rationalised.

A 'tough line' has 'paid off' at UWC, with the retrenchment of 40 academics in 1997-98 contributing to a payroll saving of R36 million. The administration was 'reviewing its structures and academic programmes to cut costs and to shift resources towards centres of excellence and relevance within the institution' in the hope of positioning UWC as a 'major competitor' in the new university system (*Financial Mail* 2000a, 2000b). In 1999, UDW closed the departments of Drama, Fine Art and History of Art, Indian Languages and History, Music and Modern European Languages, leading to 37 academic retrenchments (Hlophe, 2000). The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) closed its Afrikaans and Religious Studies departments, and in 2000 announced in the Wits 2001 programme its intention to cut at least 25 academic posts, mainly in the social sciences and humanities (Van der Walt, 2000e). At the same time, managerial functions have expanded, reflected in an increase in the numbers of administrative staff from 9,769 in 1994 to 11,750 in 1999, and a growth in executive and managerial positions from 1,125 to 1,229 in the same period (see Subotzky, 2001:5).

There has also been a marked trend for universities to cut costs by restructuring 'non-core' support services – those manual and menial functions not directly involved in knowledge production – primarily through retrenchments and outsourcing. This is reflected in the dramatic decrease in the number of support service workers at public sector universities in South Africa. From 1994 to 1999, support staff numbers fell from 14,346 to 10,817, while artisanal occupations fell from 1,433 to 951 (Subotzky, 2001:5). The process of retrenching and outsourcing support staff is consistent with international developments

(see Adler et al, 2000:4-13; Jeffries, 1996; Wertz and Gribenas, 1998), and is largely a phenomenon of the post-1994 period.

Interested in this process, the authors of this article conducted a national survey of public sector university support service restructuring in 2001, with interviews of trade unionists and human resource managers. The Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the Sociology of Work Unit (SWOP) at Wits supported the project. At all universities, bar UDW, the majority of support staff were represented by the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu), the second largest union in the Congress of South African Trade Unions with 234,607 reported members in 2001. On most campuses, academic staff is represented through separate staff associations. The findings were revealing, insofar as they allowed an examination of the impact of government policy on ordinary workers, of the factors that promoted university restructuring, of the manner in which HAI/ HDI differences have played out, and of how class struggles at local campuses have shaped the actual outcomes of international and national restructuring processes. These issues will be explored in the remainder of this paper.

Using the outsourcing of at least one support service function as the date from which outsourcing may be said to have begun, Table 2 shows that every single public sector university for which data was available introduced support service outsourcing over the last decade-and-a-half. The process of outsourcing was concentrated from 1994 onwards. Only two institutions reported that they outsourced support services earlier: the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit (RAU) in 1991, and the University of Venda in the 1980s. The number of institutions outsourcing their support services rose sharply from 1994 onwards: one in 1994, one in 1995, one in 1996, three in 1997, four in 1998, one in 1999, three in 2000, and three in 2001, making up a total of 17 institutions.

The reasons given by the human resource managers to explain why their institutions chose to outsource their support services were revealing. Data was available for 15 out of the 21 cases, and is presented in Table 3. Of the 15 universities, twelve adopted outsourcing to reduce costs and six hoped outsourcing would improve their competitiveness. A substantial number considered the decision to outsource to be part of a broader vision of improving competitiveness. In eight institutions support services were outsourced on the grounds that they were 'non-core' functions. Of the three that regarded the decision to outsource to be in line with government policy, two were HAIs (Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, or PUK, and the University of Natal) and one an HDI (Medunsa).

That the rationale of cost-cutting cut across the HAI/ HDI divide may be attributed to the *general* financial squeeze on public sector universities. In open-ended questions, respondents spoke of the need to make their institutions 'leaner', to 'do more with less', to 'reduce overheads', and to restructure due to 'financial considerations' and a lack of 'sufficient resources'. The importance of cost cutting was reflected in the reasons given for the choice of particular outsourcing companies. Table 4 shows that six out of 15 institutions for which data was available cited the efficiency of particular outside service providers; five cited cost-effectiveness as an important factor; and four chose companies that

provided the best tender.

However, cost cutting was not the only reason for support service staff restructuring, and there is no simple association between the financial situation of particular universities and the decision to cut staff costs. The additional element that must be factored in is the influence of the university marketisation paradigm on university management.

On the one hand, eight institutions gave the need to focus on 'core' activities as a rationale for support service outsourcing. As Table 3 reflects, seven were HAIs, with the exception of UWC. Insofar as the decision to focus on 'core' business converges with a model of improving the competitiveness of universities as providers of intellectual commodities, this indicates that the market university paradigm played an important role in university outsourcing. On the other hand, it was not always the most cash-strapped universities that undertook the majority of retrenchments. From Table 6, excluding the three absent cases, the sum total of support staff retrenchments was 4,912 according to human resource management, and 5,660 according to trade unionists.¹ According to data provided by human resource managers, shown in Table 7, seven campuses retrenched 300 or more workers each, accounting for nearly half of the total job losses in the sector at 3,823. According to unionists, nine campuses did so, accounting for 4,611 of the total. While it was to be expected that HDIs were well represented in this group, it is striking that well resourced HAIs were responsible for some of the biggest job losses: using human resource managers' data, the University of Pretoria retrenched 800, Wits 623, PUK 400, and the University of Stellenbosch 300.

This underlines the point that declining funds were only one of several reasons informing the decision of HAIs to restructure their support services. Referring back to Tables 3 and 4, two points are clear: all of the HAIs listed in Table 7, bar the University of Stellenbosch, cited cost-cutting as only one reason for outsourcing. Secondly, all of the HAIs listed in Table 7 also identified the need to focus on core activities. Only UWC, out of the HDIs in Table 7, identified the rationalisation of 'non-core' functions as a reason for outsourcing. All of the other HDIs listed in Table 7, for which data was available, stressed cost cutting as a rationale in Table 3.

Table 6 further demonstrates that support service outsourcing had a sharply negative impact on the wages, benefits, and job security, and working life of workers employed in the support services. It is clear from the eleven cases for which data were available from trade unionists, that conditions for outsourced workers were generally far worse than those that support service workers had enjoyed when in university employ. In all cases, wages were lower; in eight of eleven cases workers lost access to benefits, and in eight cases the outsourced workers' jobs were more insecure.² These developments took place across the HAI/ HDI divide.

1.. The differences in the figures for job losses cited by management and trade unions raise questions about the reliability of some data. It should also be noted that respondents sometimes provided either ranges of figures, or estimates. Where ranges of figures were used, we have used the mean. Where estimates were provided, we have used these figures, but stress the need for caution. The figures have also undoubtedly been affected by the lower response rate from management in general (17 interviews, as opposed to 20 for the unionists). Job loss figures do not necessarily reflect net job losses in the sector, as some retrenched workers were undoubtedly re-employed by the outside service providers, but adequate data on this issue was unavailable.

Case studies of differentiation in university restructuring

From the above, it is clear that government policy – reduced subsidisation in particular – played a crucial role in fostering university restructuring at the level of support services, but that the HAI/ HDI divide remains salient when considering the actual implementation and outcomes of national level policy initiatives. An examination of three different campuses reveals how both the capacity of management and the resources available to it (a factor also shaped by the HAI/ HDI division) on the one hand, and the responses of trade unions and other popular constituencies to support service outsourcing on the other hand, played crucial roles in shaping outcomes. These points are best illustrated through an examination of three cases of support service outsourcing: the University of the Transkei (Unitra), the HDI formerly based in the Eastern Cape; UDW, the HDI formerly reserved for Indians near Durban in Kwazulu-Natal; and Wits, a liberal English HAI based in Johannesburg in Gauteng.

Unitra, like most HDIs, has experienced great difficulty in adapting to the market university model, arising from a lack of resources and management capacity as well as simple inertia. Numerous investigations by government had confirmed a situation of crisis (Habib, 2001). Unitra had run large annual deficits since 1997, and survived 2000 because government secured it an additional R50 million credit from private banks (Habib, 2001:4-5). It had demonstrated a consistent inability to raise funds from new sources, added to an average decline of 17 per cent in student numbers from 1997. The majority of academic staff lacked doctorates and established research records (Habib, 2001:4-7), and it was unable to compete with other universities, the HAIs in particular.

Unitra's difficulties reflect its history as a 'lower grade Bantustan university' in an impoverished region (Habib, 2001:9-12) as well as an endemic instability which marred prospects to develop and implement a marketisation strategy. Continual turnover in the Vice-Chancellor'ship and senior posts in management, a state of 'near collapse' in administrative structures, crisis in the Council, Senate and the Academic Planning Committee, and a failure to implement human resource policies were evident. Widespread patronage relations and inappropriate government intervention worsened the situation (Habib, 2001:7-9, 12-21). Attempts had been made to manage the crisis through outsourcing in 1998, leading to 300 job losses (Tables 2, 6, 7), and, in the absence of a strong Nehawu structure, this proceeded rapidly. The union felt that it was marginalized and ignored in the restructuring process (Table 8). Academic retrenchments followed in 2001 (*Business Day*, 2001).

UDW management, by contrast, was able to both develop and begin implementing a 'three-year rolling plan intended to guide the university's strategic repositioning in the domestic and global environment' in 2000 (University of Durban Westville, 22 March 2000). However, from the very start, the plan was contested. The main obstacles to implementation at this university – which was, like UWC, better resourced than the Afri-

- 2.. The survey asked trade unionists to report whether outsourcing has affected outsourced workers in a given set of areas - wages, benefits, and job security – and also asked open-ended questions to clarify what was meant by a 'yes' response in each category, and invited respondents to mention other issues affecting workers.

can HDIs – were resistance from popular constituencies, rather than management incompetence and division. In addition to a powerful student movement, UDW had, unlike most campuses, a single union, the Combined Staff Association (COMSA) representing both support staff and academics, as well as an Academic Staff Association. Nehawu was marginal.

Although COMSA was unable to prevent outsourcing from 1997 onwards, and 300 jobs were lost (Tables 2, 6, 7), it managed to retain a significant control over the conditions of employment of outsourced workers. In the survey, COMSA claimed that the situation of support service workers had not worsened due to outsourcing (Table 6), attributed this to extensive union involvement in shaping the outsourcing process (Table 8), and reported that it was able to set outsourced workers' wages and conditions during the tendering process that selected outside service providers (Table 9). Furthermore, it had a recognition agreement with several of the outsourcing companies (Table 9). At the same time, the Academic Staff Association has taken management to court over the academic retrenchments of 2000 (*Academic Worker*, 2000).

The strategy, strength and determination of COMSA were thus crucial to shaping the outcome of outsourcing at UDW. By contrast, interviewed unionists on most other campuses felt marginalized during the support service restructuring, excluding four cases where restructuring was still ongoing. Unionists felt that the union had secured compromises from management in only two cases – including UDW (Table 8). As Table 9 indicates, moreover, outsourcing gutted the membership of existing support staff unions, with unionists indicating a total loss of 5,473 union members. The same table also shows that the unions had little success in regaining lost ground by organising workers employed by outsourcing companies. Only two unions out of the seventeen for which data was available had secured a recognition agreement with at least one of the outsourcing companies employed by the university; one was COMSA.

The management at Wits adopted *Shaping the Future* in 1999, a strategic plan for marketisation that argued for the 'optimisation of revenue opportunities from intellectual property and from entrepreneurial activities,' 'revenue-generating activities' and 'entrepreneurial approaches' in response to falling subsidies and student numbers (cited in Parcheesi, 2000:25). A process of rationalising academic functions and restructuring of support services ensued (Van der Walt, 2000c; Van der Walt, Mokena and Shange, 2001). At the end of June 2000 the catering, cleaning, grounds and maintenance departments were closed, the workers retrenched, and the functions outsourced.

While COMSA was able to have a significant impact on the outsourcing process at UDW, the well-organised Nehawu branch at Wits suffered a crushing loss of members and subsequent marginalisation in the support services (Tables 8, 9).

Wits, characterised by a centralised and powerful management, and a stable financial situation, was able to afford outside experts to manage the process of restructuring (see Table 4) and did not face significant opposition from university constituencies other than Nehawu. The academics' staff union did not support Nehawu, a small 'concerned academics group' that opposed the restructuring (see, for example, the report by Adler et al, 2000) was ignored, and the student movement was marginal. While vowing that the union

would 'never allow a destruction of a public asset in the narrow sectarian interests of privatisation' (Molaba, 2000), Nehawu's strategy centred on using the courts to challenge the legality of the retrenchments, and not on mobilising its constituency to halt management; it also ignored the impact of government policy (Molaba, 2000). Thus, Wits, like other HAIs, was able to make great strides towards the market university model – and able to do so despite a powerful union constituency – and generate a substantial amount of additional income (see Stumpf, 2001:4-5). Nehawu was marginalised in the process (Table 8).

From the above discussion, it is clear that where management was weak and divided, as was the case of Unitra, marketisation foundered, even if staff restructuring took place. A powerful and unified management, like that of Wits, was able to push through a thoroughgoing restructuring, illustrating that available resources clearly also played a role in management's ability to plan and implement restructuring. At the same time, class struggles were extremely important in shaping the form neoliberal restructuring assumed. Even divided and under-resourced managements were able to restructure support services where unions were weak, as was the case at Unitra. Better-positioned managements were forced to compromise where unions and other constituencies were strong, as was the case at UDW. Strong unions were, in turn, weakened by poor strategy, as was the case at Wits.

Conclusion

Globalisation and neoliberalism have had a significant impact on South African government policy, including on the post-apartheid government, which set out to restructure the country's public sector universities in line with neoliberal policies. The commitment of the post-apartheid government to the 'creation of new South African higher education institutions based on the values and principles of non-racism and democracy' (Asmal, 2001) is coupled with a concern for fiscal austerity and university marketisation. To the extent that globalisation and neoliberalism have restructured the universities both have tended to reproduce existing divisions and inequalities. The general pressure on all universities to restructure has not homogenised the sector, but, instead, tended to reproduce the HAI/HDI distinction – the 'market university' has only emerged at the HAIs and the two best resourced HDIs, UDW and UWC.

At the same time, power relations and class struggles at university level profoundly shaped the actual implementation of neoliberal government policy in South Africa. All public sector universities in South Africa are under pressure to restructure. Yet the extent to which the different institutions were able to adopt the 'market university' model and the actual manner in which outsourcing happened, were conditioned by the capacity and resources of management, on the one hand, and of the working class, in unions, on the other. ANC neoliberalism bears much responsibility for the negative effects of university restructuring, such as retrenchments, outsourcing and deunionisation, but management and union actions have also been of vital importance in shaping actual outcomes. The 'local', in short, conditions the 'global', with local struggles playing a vital role in shaping globalisation and neoliberalism. Politically, this means that ordinary people are not powerless in the face of worldwide change: their actions and decisions do matter, and their

choices *can* still make a great difference, globalisation and neoliberalism notwithstanding. Class struggle, in short, continues to shape the world.

Table 1 The higher education workforce by personnel category, 1994 and 1999

	Executive/ Managerial	Academic/ Professional	Specialist support	Technical	Adminis- trative	Crafts/ trades	Support	Total
1994	1,125	13,717	2,200	2,610	9,769	14,331	14,346	45,200
1999	1,229	14,412	2,514	2,361	11,750	951	10,817	44,034

Source: Subotzky 2001: 5, figure 2.

Table 2 The spread and timing of outsourcing in public sector universities in South Africa.

	Institution	Type	Year outsourcing began	Outsourcing currently taking place	Is staff restructuring likely to continue
1.	Medical University of South Africa	HDI	2001	YES	YES
2.	Potchefstroom University: CHE	HAI	1998	NO	NO
3.	Rand Afrikaans University	HAI	1991	NO	NO (YES) ⁵
4.	Rhodes University	HAI	1994	YES	YES
5.	University of Cape Town ⁵	HAI	[1999]	[NO]	[NO]
6.	University of Durban-Westville	HDI	1997	YES	YES
7.	University of Fort Hare	HDI	1997	YES	YES
8.	University of the Free State	HAI	2000	NO	YES
9.	University of Natal	HAI	1997	NO	NO (YES) ⁵
10.	University of the North	HDI	2001	YES	YES
11.	University of the North-West	HDI	(2001) ⁵	(YES)	(YES)
12.	University of Port Elizabeth	HAI	1995 (1992) ⁵	YES	YES
13.	University of Pretoria	HAI	1998	YES	YES
14.	University of Stellenbosch	HAI	1995	NO	NO
15.	University of South Africa	HAI	1996	NO	YES
16.	University of the Transkei	HDI	(1998)	(YES)	(YES)
17.	University of Venda	HDI	1985 ⁵	NO	NO
18.	University of the Western Cape	HDI	1998	NO	NO
19.	University of the Witwatersrand	HAI	2000	YES	YES
20.	University of Zululand	HDI	2000	YES	YES
21.	Vista University ⁵	HDI	(Has begun, but date unknown)	(NO)	(YES)
	Totals		21	10	11

Source: HR interviews; union responses are cited in brackets where responses differ from those of HR, or are the only available source; UCT data derived from secondary sources and indicated by square brackets; N/a = not available.

Table 3 Reasons cited by management for support service outsourcing

	Institution	Type	Cut cost	Non-core function	Improve efficiency	Govt. dictate	'Seasonal labour'	Improve productivity	'Global competition'
1.	Medical University of South Africa	HDI	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
2.	Potchefstroom University: CHE	HAI	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
3.	Rand Afrikaans University	HAI	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
4.	Rhodes University	HAI	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
5.	University of Cape Town	HAI	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
6.	University of Durban-Westville	HDI	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
7.	University of Fort Hare	HDI	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
8.	University of the Free State	HAI	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
9.	University of Natal	HAI	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
10.	University of the North	HDI	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
11.	University of the North-West	HDI	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
12.	University of Port Elizabeth	HAI	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
13.	University of Pretoria	HAI	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
14.	University of Stellenbosch	HAI	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
15.	University of South Africa	HAI	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
16.	University of the Transkei	HDI	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
17.	University of Venda	HDI	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
18.	University of Western Cape	HDI	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
19.	University of the Witwaters-rand	HAI	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
20.	University of Zululand	HDI	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
21.	Vista University	HDI	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Totals		12	8	6	3	1	1	3
			80%	53.3%	40.0%	20.0%	6.7%	6.7%	20.0%

Source: HR interviews; N/a = not available.

Table 4 Reasons given by management for selection of particular outsourcing companies

Institution	Reason for choosing outsourced company ^s
1. Medical University of South Africa	'Government recommendation'
2. Potchefstroom University: CHE	Cost-effective Efficient
3. Rand Afrikaans University	Efficient
4. Rhodes University	Best tender
5. University of Cape Town	N/a
6. University of Durban-Westville	N/a
7. University of Fort Hare	Cost-effective
8. University of the Orange Free State	Best tender
9. University of Natal	Efficient
10. University of the North	N/a
11. University of the North-West	N/a
12. University of Port Elizabeth	Best tender
13. University of Pretoria	Best tender
14. University of Stellenbosch	Cost-effective Efficient
15. University of South Africa	Efficient
16. University of the Transkei	N/a
17. University of Venda	Best tender
18. University of the Western Cape	Cost-effective Efficient
19. University of the Witwatersrand	Cost-effective Employment and empowerment
20. University of Zululand	N/a
21. Vista University	N/a
	Totals Efficiency: 6 Cost-effectiveness: 5 Best tender: 4

Source: HR interviews; N/a = not available.

Table 5 Did universities use consultants when considering options for support service restructuring?

Institution	Type	Did university hire consultants when restructuring support services?	Details of consultant, if available
1. Medical University of South Africa	HDI	Yes	KPMG, commissioned by government
2. Potchefstroom University: CHE	HAI	Yes	Individual consultants
3. Rand Afrikaans University	HAI	N/a	-
4. Rhodes University	HAI	No	-
5. University of Cape Town	HAI	[Yes]	[University Management Associates]
6. University of Durban-Westville	HDI	No	-
7. University of Fort Hare	HDI	Yes	Productivity Assignments
8. University of the Free State	HAI	Yes	Individual consultants
9. University of Natal	HAI	No	-
10. University of the North	HDI	Yes	Northern Consortium
11. University of the North-West	HDI	N/a	-
12. University of Port Elizabeth	HAI	No	-
13. University of Pretoria	HAI	Yes	University Management Associates Price, Waterhouse and Cooper
14. University of Stellenbosch	HAI	Yes	N/a
15. University of South Africa	HAI	N/a	-
16. University of the Transkei	HDI	N/a	-
17. University of Venda	HDI	N/a	-
18. University of the Western Cape	HDI	No	-
19. University of the Witwatersrand	HAI	Yes	University Management Associates
20. University of Zululand	HDI	Yes	N/a
21. Vista University	HDI	(Yes)	N/a
Totals		Hired consultants: 11	
		Did not use consultants: 5	
		Not available: 5	

Source: HR interviews; union responses in brackets where responses differ from those of HR, or are only available source; UCT data derived from secondary material, indicated by square brackets; N/a= not available.

Table 6 Impact on employment, benefits, wages and working conditions

Institution	Number of workers retrenched during restructuring	Lower wages than in university employ	Fewer benefits than in university employ	More job insecurity? ⁵	Working life is generally worse? ⁵
1. Medical University of South Africa	Still in progress (SIP)	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress
2. Potchefstroom University: CHE	400 (450)	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/a
3. Rans Afrikaans University	107 (N/a)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Rhodes University	15 (8)	No	No	No	No
5. University of Cape Town	[267] ⁵	[Yes]	[Yes]	[Yes]	[Yes]
6. University of Durban-Westville	37 (300)	No	No	No	No
7. University of Fort Hare	1000 (938)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
8. University of the Orange Free State	283 (275)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9. University of Natal	280 (450) ⁵	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/a
10. University of the North	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress
11. University of the North-West	60 (N/a)	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress
12. University of Port Elizabeth	20 (92)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
13. University of Pretoria	800 (800)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
14. University of Stellenbosch	300 (240)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
15. University of South Africa	20 (N/a)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
16. University of the Transkei	N/a (300)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
17. University of Venda	N/a (0)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
18. University of Western Cape ⁵	300 (400)	N/a	N/a	N/a	Yes
19. University of Witwatersrand	623 (623)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
20. University of Zululand	400 (350)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
21. Vista University	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Totals	4912 (5660)	Yes: 8	Yes: 9	Yes: 8	Yes: 8
	HR (union)	No: 3	No: 2	No: 3	No: 2
	N/a: 1	N/a: 7	N/a: 7	N/a: 7	N/a: 8
	In progress: 3	In progr: 3	In progr: 3	In progr: 3	In progr: 3

Source: retrenchment figures from HR interviews and unions (union data bracketed); union interviews for all other data; UCT data from secondary material, in square brackets; N/a = not available.

Table 7 Public sector universities that retrenched 300 or more workers

	Institution	Type of institution	Number of workers retrenched during restructuring (Human Resource Management informants)	Number of workers retrenched during restructuring (Trade union informants)
1.	Potchefstroom University: CHE	HAI	400	450
2.	University of Durban-Westville	HDI	37	300
3.	University of Fort Hare	HDI	1000	938
4.	University of Natal	HAI	280	450 ^s
5.	University of Pretoria	HAI	800	800
6.	University of Stellenbosch	HAI	300	240
7.	University of the Transkei	HDI	N/a	300
8.	University of Western Cape ^s	HDI	300	400
9.	University of Witwatersrand	HAI	623	623
10.	University of Zululand	HDI	400	350
	Totals (excluding figures <300)	HDI: 5 HAI: 5	3,823 77.8% of total	4,611 81.1% of total

Source: HR interviews; trade union interviews.

Table 8 Union involvement in restructuring process

	Institution	Was union adequately involved in restructuring process?⁶	Did union sign agreement with management regarding outsourcing?
1.	Medical University of South Africa	Still in progress	Still in progress
2.	Potchefstroom University: CHE	Not adequately consulted	No
3.	Rand Afrikaans University	Not adequately consulted	No
4.	Rhodes University	Consulted but no agreement	No
5.	University of Cape Town ⁵	[Not adequately consulted]	[No]
6.	University of Durban-Westville	Yes: Secured compromises	Yes
7.	University of Fort Hare	Not adequately consulted	No
8.	University of the Orange Free State	Yes	No
9.	University of Natal ⁵	Not adequately consulted	No
10.	University of the North	Still in progress	Still in progress
11.	University of the North-West	Still in progress	Still in progress
12.	University of Port Elizabeth	Not adequately consulted	Yes
13.	University of Pretoria	Not adequately consulted	No
14.	University of Stellenbosch	Not adequately consulted	No
15.	University of South Africa	Still in progress	Still in progress
16.	University of the Transkei	Not adequately consulted	No
17.	University of Venda	Yes	No
18.	University of the Western Cape ⁵	Not adequately consulted	N/a
19.	University of the Witwatersrand	Not adequately consulted	No
20.	University of Zululand	Yes: secured compromises	Yes
21.	Vista University	Union leadership consulted, but members marginalised	Yes
	Totals	Adequately consulted: 4 Secured compromises: 2 Inadequately consulted: 11 Consulted, disagreed: 1 Other: 1 In progress: 4 Not available: 0	Signed agreement: 4 No agreement: 12 In progress: 4 Not available: 1

Source: trade union interviews; UCT data derived from secondary material, indicated by square brackets; N/a = not available.

Table 9 Impact of support service restructuring and outsourcing upon union organisation

	Institution	Net loss of union members due to service restructuring (Main union only)	Number of shop stewards retrenched in service restructuring (Main union only)	Is union attempting to unionise at least one outsourcing company?	Does union currently negotiate for workers in at least one outsourcing company?	Does union have recognition agreement with at least one outsourcing company?
1.	Medical University of South Africa	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress
2.	Potchefstroom University: CHE	297	4	Yes	In talks	In talks
3.	Rand Afrikaans University	100	0	Yes	No	No
4.	Rhodes University	5	0	N/a	No	No
5.	University of Cape Town	N/a	N/a	[Yes]	[No]	[No]
6.	University of Durban-Westville	300	0	N/a	Yes – during tendering	Yes
7.	University of Fort Hare	938	24	Yes	Yes	No
8.	University of the Orange Free State	278	13	Yes	In talks	In talks
9.	University of Natal ⁵	450	2	N/a	No	No
10.	University of the North	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress
11.	University of the North-West	60	N/a	Still in progress	Still in progress	Still in progress
12.	University of Port Elizabeth	150	6	N/a	No	No
13.	University of Pretoria	584	12	N/a	No	No
14.	University of Stellenbosch	300 ⁵	10	N/a	N/a	No
15.	University of South Africa	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
16.	University of the Transkei	500	18	N/a	No	No
17.	University of Venda	0	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
18.	University of the Western Cape ⁵	500 ⁵	10	Yes	Yes	Yes
19.	University of Witwatersrand	623	3	No	No	No
20.	University of Zululand	300	2	N/a	No	No
21.	Vista University ⁵	88	9	N/a	No	No
	Totals	5473	113	Yes: 6 No: 1 N/a: 11 In progr: 3	Yes: 3 No: 10 In talks: 2 N/a: 3 In progr: 3	Yes: 2 No: 12 In talks: 2 N/a: 2 In progr: 3

Source: union interviews; UCT data derived from secondary material, indicated by square brackets; N/a: not available.

Appendix Summary of survey respondents by institution, 2001

Institution	Human resource department interviewed?	Majority union representative interviewed?
1. Medical University of South Africa	Yes	Yes
2. Potchefstroom University for CHE	Yes	Yes
3. Rand Afrikaans University (RAU)	Yes	Yes
4. Rhodes University	Yes	Yes
5. University of Cape Town (UCT)	No	No
6. University of Durban-Westville (UDW)	Yes	Yes
7. University of Fort Hare	Yes	Yes
8. University of the Free State (UOFS)	Yes	Yes
9. University of Natal	Yes	Yes ⁵
10. University of the North	Yes	Yes
11. University of the North-West	No	Yes
12. University of Port Elizabeth (UPE)	Yes	Yes
13. University of Pretoria	Yes	Yes
14. University of Stellenbosch	Yes	Yes
15. University of South Africa (UNISA)	Yes	Yes
16. University of the Transkei (Unitra)	No	Yes
17. University of Venda	Yes	Yes
18. University of the Western Cape (UWC)	Yes	Yes
19. University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)	Yes	Yes
20. University of Zululand	Yes	Yes
21. Vista University	No	Yes
Total	17	20

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