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2013-03-20
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Fighting a Tough Battle

Addressing Gender Inequality in the Unions: A case study of the South African Commercial, Catering Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU)

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts (by coursework) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree in any other university. I also declare that this is my original work produced and submitted in accordance with all rules of professional academic standards and ethics

Zuziwe Khuzwayo Signature of Candidate

28 Day of June 2012

Abstract

Gender inequality is one of the hardest issues in our society to tackle. Women continue to be paid less for the same work done by men and experience the highest forms of exploitation. This research will focus on how the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) has chosen a unique separatist model in dealing with gender inequality that occurs within the union. The focus of the research is whether the separate space created for women has been successful. The research looks at how different members of the union have had experience with the separatist model adopted by the union and how they have found it to be successful for them not only in the workplace, but also in other spheres of their lives. The gender policy, which advocates the separate space, is examined and how it has been informed by previous workshops, discussions and programmes run by the union. Certain programmes run by the gender department within the union are examined and used as a success for the model implemented by the union.

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Introduction

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is occurring at all levels of society. In the home women experience domestic and sexual violence, while at the workplace inequality still persists. In the recent Employment Equity report it showed that 81.1% of top management is occupied by males and women only occupy 19% (Employment Equity Report 2010-2011). For those women who are in management only 3.1% of them are African women, while White women are 12% in management. In the recent International Labour Report it showed that over 40% of the global labour force is women and in developing countries over 70% of the labour force is women yet they experience the highest forms of exploitation with regard to wages and working conditions (ILO Report, 2010). When looking at leadership in unions the picture is gloomy. In the United States of America over 40% of members are female, but they continue to be under represented in decision making positions (Glover & Kirton, 2006). In COSATU women make up 37% of members but leadership structures are predominantly men. In branch and regional secretaries' positions, men occupy 89% while women occupy 11%. In all of the unions of the federation 100% of the general secretaries are men. The only position for which women beat men is the administration position where women occupy 94% (COSATU, 2008). It is clear that gender inequality is a problem in all spheres of society. This research paper will pay particular attention to the inequality which happens in the South African Commercial Catering & Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) and the measures in place to address the issue.

SACCAWU and its origins

Unions have played a significant part in the history of South Africa, whether it is the opposition to the apartheid regime, or the struggle which it continues to pursue for the rights of workers. The influence and power that unions have in South Africa is noticeable with strikes decreasing labour's productivity in a day or at times weeks (which is bad for the economy) and the influence which the union, particularly the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), has in the political landscape. The role of women in the unions has been very important in the various struggles of the movement, but their role and various concerns affecting women are rarely recognized as an issue for broader struggles in society. For SACCAWU which has over 107 553 members and more than 70% of those members are

women, it has still not had a woman President since its inception in 1975 (SACCAWU(a) www.saccawu.org.za accessed on 3 May 2011). Recent statistics of 2010 show that women continue to hold positions of Treasurer (65%) and Secretary (55%). Women only occupy 33% of National Office Bearer roles and only 18% of National Executive Committee roles. This is an alarming statistic and forces one to ask why women are so marginalized in a union where they are the majority.

The union was first started in 1975 by Ray Altman and Morris Kagan under the name Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) (Forrest, 2005). CCAWUSA established itself after various strikes by the African Commercial and Distributive Workers Union (ACDWU) and the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDW) which were African and White unions respectively, who then came together to fight for minimum wages for workers in the services and hospitality sectors (Forrest, 2005). An example of the solidarity between the two unions irrespective of race can be seen in the 1943 strike where 1000 OK Bazaar workers came together to march against poor wages. With the oppressive laws implemented by the Apartheid regime against African people during the 1950's the alliance fell through and ACDWU aligned itself with the African National Congress (ANC) and joined the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) while the NUDW aligned itself with the conservative Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) (Forrest, 2005). After the Durban strikes of 1973 occurred, a Wiehahn Comission was set up by the government to look at industrial relations in the country. White and black workers began to organize together again and put pressure on the government to legalize African trade unions. With their communist beliefs influencing their perspective on worker's rights, Altman and Kagan did not want to run CCAWUSA and have African workers as just members, they both believed that African workers should organize and lead the union.

During the 1970's the Wiehahn laws were passed and this legalized African trade unions. One of the first retailers to recognize an African union was Pick 'n Pay in 1977 and it recognized CCAWUSA (which later became SACCAWU). This then spread through to other retailers such as Game, Woolworths, Edgars and CNA (Forrest, 2005). Today the union organizes itself in the catering, tourism, hospitality, commercial wholesale (retail) and

finance sectors (banks, assurance and insurance) with a majority being in the commercial wholesale sector (SACCAWU(a), www.saccawu.org.za, accessed on 3 May 2011).

SACCAWU and the Recognition of Women

With the majority of workers being women in the space that SACCAWU has chosen to organize (hospitality and retail), it has always had to engage with the issue of women's rights and the grievances that women have a lot more as compared to other unions. An important landmark in the history of the union is that the first general secretary of the union was a woman named Emma Mashinini (Forrest, 2005). Mashinini was a garment worker who was active in the Garment Workers Union. Mashinini fought tirelessly for workers' rights (wage disputes and racial inequality), but more importantly for women's rights (Forrest, 2005). This is important as it indicates that women do have the capabilities to be in positions of leadership but opportunities so far have been limited. Secondly what this indicates is that a woman can fight for workers' rights while at the same time fighting for women's rights.

One of the first campaigns in which SACCAWU highlighted the plight of women was the 'Oppression of Women' campaign in 1989 (Forest, 2005). This campaign believed that women's oppression was part of gender oppression because whatever affected women affected men (Forest, 2005). If women were, for example, in dangerous working conditions and were exposed to dangerous chemicals or machinery, this affected their ability to perform responsibilities and duties in the workplace, which affects their fellow male colleagues. The campaign also believed that household duties should be shared and that women workers should not have to do a 'double shift' of work by themselves (being an economic labourer and then a domestic labourer in the home).

One of the most important issues affecting women in the union is that of maternity. Women continue to face discrimination and unfair wage pay-outs if they are pregnant. Before the union fought against this, many women were actually being fired from their jobs because they were pregnant. It was not until 1983 when SACCAWU went on strike against OK Bazaar demanding that workers be guaranteed their jobs when they are pregnant and even after they give birth and return to the workplace (Forest, 2005). Full payment of wages when on maternity leave has also been an issue which the union has fought for. One of the first

retailers that negotiated with SACCAWU and allowed for 33% payment of the normal wage of workers was Metro Cash ‘n Carry. This percentage added with the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) which covered for 45% of monthly wages, allowed for women workers to gain 78% of their normal wages and to also be provided with treatment in ante-natal clinics. The agreement allowed for workers to be able to negotiate time off from working with heavy machinery or exposure to harmful chemicals which could hurt the baby (Forest, 2005). This is significant as it showcased that “women’s issues” such as maternity leave are important and need to be bargained for just like any other issue which is bargained for on behalf of workers. Secondly this negotiation was important as it indicated that issues affecting women should be part of the broader struggle for fairness and equality in the workplace and not an adhoc issue. This indicated SACCAWU’S determination in addressing gender inequality.

Another significant step forward which the union has made is the parental rights agreement. This agreement allowed for fathers who have a new-born to not only take leave on the day the child is born, but to have 3 days paid paternity leave where they can participate in, for example, preparing the house for the mother to return from hospital, or buying any goods that need to be bought for the mother or baby (International Labour Resource and Information Organization, 2000). This is important as the union wanted to show that having a child is not a role only assigned to women, but that it also involves men, therefore the roles and duties men play in the household are important to consider. One of the first companies to agree to this was Pick ‘n Pay. The company allowed for fathers to have 8 days of leave who worked in the same company as their spouse if she were pregnant and gave birth (Forest, 2005). The agreement also provided healthcare needs for pregnant women in the workplace. This agreement is important as it highlights the issue of making men more involved in the household sphere of their lives and not leaving that responsibility to the woman in the relationship. Companies such as Shoprite Checkers, Clicks and Makro followed Pick ‘n Pay’s parental rights agreement in the early 1990’s and it still exists today.

One of the ways in which addressing gender inequality in the unions has occurred is through leadership. If women workers are in leadership roles, it is argued that they will put forward the grievances affecting women in the workplace (Orr, 2006). Leadership within the unions can be found in various positions, but one of the key roles is that of a shopsteward. A

shopsteward is an elected worker who observes union standards in the workplace. She/he is elected by her/his fellow workers in order to represent workers when it comes to negotiation of benefits and wages or raising any grievances which they might have to employers or at National Congress (Orkin & Pityana, 1992). National Congress is when the different regions across South Africa of the union come together and make decisions and resolutions which will be implemented in all regions where SACCAWU is organized. Within SACCAWU a concerted effort over the years has been made to elect woman workers as shopstewards. By 2003 the union aimed to have 65% of shopstewards to be women, but this has not been achieved as the majority of the members rejected the quota system as they felt that this would not be based on merit of the individual, but on the sex of the individual which some members believe is unfair. This system was first suggested in the September Commission of 1997 which dealt with the lack of woman leadership in the unions (Daphne, Horton & Orr, 1997). Other affiliates such as the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) and the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CIWU) supported the quota system as they believed it would force the different affiliates to begin to take "women's issues" seriously and to engage in women becoming leaders of the union and also to train women union members. The role of a gender co-ordinator is that it must keep an overview on programmes that the gender department has and ensure that they are implemented. The gender co-ordinator must raise awareness on issues affecting women in the workplace and how they can be dealt with. Gender co-ordinators are supposed to occupy local levels of the union all the way up to the national levels of the union. Gender Co-ordinators have been designated within the workplace to address the inequality that may occur against women workers, but the problem is that not all of them occupy this position as full-time workers. They usually fulfil this role part-time while doing administration duties (Forrest, 2005).

It must be mentioned that when dealing with "women's issues' SACCAWU means issues affecting women and when they speak of "gender issues" they mean both men and women, but with particular attention to issues affecting women (SACCAWU(a), 2011). Gender issues also deal with sexual orientation and how the union has chosen to deal with the issue of sexual discrimination.

At the recent National Congress of SACCAWU held in October 2011 the Organizational Commission wanted over 70% of National Office Bearers to be women as the previous goal of 2003 had not been met. This was then sent to the National Congress and it was not

accepted, instead the union adopted the resolution that by 2016 60% of National Office Bearers must be women. One of the longstanding reasons to explain the rejection of the quota is that some members within the union believe that merit would be overlooked in favour of gender which did not please members as they believed that this would be tokenism (Daphne, Horton & Orr, 1997). From 1998- 2008 less than 50% of women were in positions of National Office Bearer. Within the National Executive Committee over the years, less than 20% have been women (SACCAWU(a),www.saccawu.org.za, accessed 3 May 2011). This is a union which is mainly made up of women, yet women in leadership roles have been very limited. The role which women seem to occupy within the union in high numbers is that of treasurer or secretary as mentioned previously. These roles are limited in enacting any change which will benefit women. At the National level women still continue to occupy Deputy Roles instead of actual Presidential or Secretary General Roles. This positioning of women union members does not allow for leadership of women to grow. A reason perhaps for this is because of the patriarchal entrenched beliefs which continue to be a part of our society and in this case the union. This ideology does not believe that women should be occupying positions of leadership. Instead, that role is meant for a man and not a woman. This could explain why women continue to occupy the positions they do within the union (Hartman, 1976).

Decision to deal with gender inequality

The way in which COSATU has chosen to deal with gender inequality is by having separate structures within the federation for women (Baskin, 1991). The union felt that a separate structure was important as it allowed women amongst themselves to discuss and articulate properly the issues that are affecting them without being intimidated by men (Baskin, 1991). This particularly pertains to the issue of sexual harassment where some women workers may be nervous when speaking about this issue around men. Having a separate structure was argued to be important as women could, amongst themselves, begin to gain confidence in their leadership abilities and raise their concerns. As a result, when it came to dealing with issues outside of the women-only forums they could be educated and confident to express their points of view (Lawrence, 1994). This idea was not favoured by the National Union of Mineworkers as they believed that this would create a separatist structure which had power which would not be beneficial to the advancement of workers as a whole (Lawrence, 1994).

With different arguments being made in dealing with gender inequality within trade unions, particularly SACCAWU, it has chosen to look predominantly at issues affecting women as opposed to men. This does not mean that the union does not recognize that men also have concerns when dealing with gender inequality, but gender inequality tends to affect women more than it does men. Gender as defined by COSATU (which SACCAWU has chosen to follow) is a set of 'socially constructed and culturally defined relations between men and women' (COSATU (a), 2008: 3.) The federation recognizes that through institutions such as the church, school and the family, men and women have been socialised into believing that specific behaviours and actions are required to be done by women and that there are specific behaviours and actions that are the responsibility of men. The problem is that in looking at these gender relations in a capitalist-patriarchal society, women are at the vulnerable end of the unequal gender relations in society through the various institutions mentioned above (COSATU(a), 2008).

It is for this reason that this report focuses on:

> *Has SACCAWU's choice to organize women union members separately been effective in addressing problems of gender inequality in the union?*

Sub-questions which will answer this major question are:

- What were the motivations to organize separately?
- Has the union recognized the numerous issues affecting women?
- How has the union gone about resolving these issues affecting women?
- How do union members themselves feel about the decision to organize separately?
- Has leadership within the union taken a central role in addressing gender inequality?
- Has the position of women changed for the better in the union?
- Has the approach to gender issues improved for the better in the union?

Rationale

The reasons why I chose to look at trade unions with regard to gender inequality are many. Firstly trade unions have a history of challenging inequalities and fighting for what they believe is the just way of not only how workers should be treated, but ultimately how society should organize itself. In South Africa COSATU has been fundamental in fighting against inequalities. The federation has also been vocal, trying to raise gender inequality awareness and on finding solutions to address this issue. The reason why I chose to look at SACCAWU is that it has been one of the leaders in raising gender inequality in the broader topic of the worker struggle and by showing how if gender inequality persists then any fundamental social change will not occur.

As SACCAWU is an organization mainly made up of women, raising gender inequality has definitely shaped the union's objectives. I have also chosen to focus on the gender policy of SACCAWU as policies are important in implementing the objectives/aims which translate into strategies that the union wants to occur. How SACCAWU has chosen to deal with gender inequality is also interesting for research. The reason for this is because the separate space is not fully separate as men are allowed to participate in the workshops or programmes. The union has recognized that gender is about both men and women and how each sex relates to one another (SACCAWU(b), 2011). The union has chosen to focus on women and empower them in these separate spaces while allowing men to attend workshops and programmes. This is unique as a totally separate space is not created and men can participate. This is interesting as one can evaluate whether this type of model is successful in dealing with gender inequality.

Another reason for researching this topic is because as trade unions struggle for better working conditions and better wages for workers, gender equality has to be at the forefront in all of this change. The dominance of patriarchy still exists in our society whether men are being paid more in the workplace even though the same amount of work is done, or in the household where women have to fulfil all the household duties because it is 'expected' of them. Women have never been able to fully participate in all spheres of society without barriers confronting them. Raising the issue of gender inequality in the unions hopefully has and will conscientize workers into moving past the workplace and into broader society in raising the inequalities that occur against women. With the feminist movements and the

dispensation of democracy occurring, some believe that equality has occurred and that this inequality that one speaks of is subjective and at times even culturally biased. This is not the case as gender inequality is overt in some instances, such as violence against women, but at times it is covert such as men being paid more.

In looking at the policy one clearly has to recognize how gender is being defined. This is important because how one defines gender will affect how it is viewed within the union and how it will then be used instrumentally when implementing strategies. One of the criticisms when looking at gender inequality is how it is assumed that it refers only to women. This then translates into looking at female challenges and how to eradicate those challenges. This approach has been criticized for separating women into their own field of study. It therefore does not address the relations that occur between men and women and how this plays a part in the inequality which women experience.

A gender department has been created in SACCAWU. I looked at how it functions (its aims and objectives, whether it has enough resources, and awareness) and how have female union members reacted to a department being created.

The second part of the separatist model is ensuring that mainstreaming of gender issues occur within the union. This means that gender must not be seen as an adhoc issue in the union, but must be included in all sectors of the union when decisions, agreements and policies are discussed. I researched the motivations around choosing this structure. What strategies have been adopted in trying to deal with gender inequality because of this separatist model?

In order for any gender equality to occur men have to become conscious of the issues facing women. In the union I looked at what role men play in promoting gender equality and how they have engaged this topic.

This research allowed for me to evaluate the history of how SACCAWU has chosen to deal with gender inequality and how previous decisions have informed the current policy.

Literature Review

When looking at gender inequality that occurs in our society one, as previously mentioned, has to be conscious of the fact that the inequality occurs in various spaces and in different forms. At times inequality translates into oppression. This literature review will look at the various spaces in which inequality against women has occurred and how one sphere relates to the other from existing literature.

The Family

Two very important ideas of thought which have influenced the discourse of women's oppression have been that of the feminist school of thought and the Marxist school of thought. For feminists the oppression of women begins in the division of the sexes. One of the most important feminists to explain how gender inequality occurs is Simone De Beauvoir. De Beauvoir looks through history and culture in our societies at how men are seen as the perfect being and women are seen as the imperfect being, hence 'the other' (De Beauvoir, 1997). This is critical as it immediately puts the man at the centre of society and the woman as secondary and not equal to this being. For women their main function is to reproduce. If a woman does not reproduce she is not seen as being a 'woman' (De Beauvoir, 1997). This is important as the roles of what a woman should do have been assigned to her without consent. What this also does is that it sets up the situation which we currently have whereby reproduction and looking after children is a woman's responsibility and is not in a man's 'natural' behaviour. Philosophers such as Hegel and Engels have a clear hostility towards women and view the man as the essential being and women as the inessential being in their writings. French author L. Irigaray argues that our society is built on the phallus being at the centre of society and women are exchanged like commodities whether it is in the marketplace or in the home (Irigaray, 1985). The use-value of a woman is determined by men and that value lies either in reproduction or being part of the labour force.

In historical literature, such as the Bible, Eve is described as being born from Adam. The masculine type of human in history is seen as the absolute type, while the woman is seen as imperfect because of her distinctiveness (womb and vagina). Women are constantly being

defined by others and not by themselves in society. This instantly sets up a relation where the man is seen as being independent and of the perfect species, while the woman is seen as a dependant being who is not perfect. This then sees the man as superior and so the injustice from the divisions between the sexes begins (Firestone, 1997).

One of the first places in which the socialization process occurs is that of the family. The roles and activities which women and men play within the household have far reaching effects on wider society, particularly the workplace. In the article entitled *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community,* Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James look at how the family is set up so that it benefits a capitalist society. A capitalist society is defined in this paper as a society in which wage-exploitation occurs and assets are privately owned and not communally owned and exchange of labour for wages occurs in the market. In a pre-capitalist society, the family was at the centre of production (Dalla Costa & James, 1972). Agriculture and artisan skills were central to production and the family was the beneficiary of this production, because if anything was made it was made for subsistence and survival and not for profits. It must be mentioned that in this 'primitive communism' women were at the centre of this type of production as agriculture (food, seeds, and plants) were provided substantially by women (Smith, 1997).

The Marxist School of Thought argues that women's oppression got worse when a class society started to develop in human society (Smith, 1997). With the rise of capitalism, particularly during the early industrial years of the 1920s, the factory became the centre of society and producing profits at any expense was the ultimate goal (Dalla Costa & James, 1972). It must be mentioned that in both pre-capitalist and capitalist societies, patriarchy did occur, but in a capitalist society, patriarchy was more extensive than in a pre-capitalist society. Capitalism organized the 'nuclear family' into one where the man goes out and works in the factory for a wage and the woman stays at home doing household activities (Smith, 1997). Already from the outset you have a gendered division of labour where the role of the woman is seen in the household and the man role is seen outside the household. This has an impact which is seen today as men do not feel that it is 'man's work' to cook or clean, but rather that this duty belongs to women (Dalla Costa & James, 1972). A very important element of the household activities which women do in the home is that it is not seen as work. When a child is born for the first few years of its life, it is assumed that it must be with its mother for the majority of its growth during these formative years. This then limits the mobility of a woman as she has to be in the household looking after the child as compared to

her male counterpart who is able to be a lot more mobile as he is not seen as the main adult which the child is dependent on (Firestone, 1997).

This first process of socialization which any human being experiences sets in motion the division between the sexes and therefore creates this imbalance between the sexes. This idea is justified by the belief that it is somehow in 'women's nature' to look after the children and to clean the house and therefore to have any sort of payment would be seen as irrational. What this then creates is a system of unpaid labour, where reproductive labour is perceived as being innately a woman's responsibility and not being worthy of compensation, as compared to productive labour which is seen as deserving of compensation in financial terms (Firestone, 1997).

This form of unpaid labour then becomes crucial in the reproduction of labour power in the economic workplace. In the book entitled *Power, Production and Social Reproduction*, Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill look at how the unpaid labour in the household becomes crucial in reproducing the labourer in the workplace and also how this unpaid labour continues to preserve the poor wages distributed in a capitalist system (Bakker & Gill, 2003). Social reproduction is defined as the 'biological reproduction of the species and on-going reproduction of the commodity labour power' (Bakker & Gill, 2003: 17). Social reproduction then becomes central to any sort of discussion whether it is economic, family or political as the creation of this unpaid labour which is social, and the maintenance of this unpaid labour is important to the advancement of capitalism. This has a limiting effect on a woman's agency to leave the household and work in the economic workforce as she is forced to ensure that her social reproduction is occurring regardless of any other activities that she may be engaging in (Bakker & Gill, 2003). This then creates the 'double shift'. This becomes crucial when looking at patriarchy and capitalism as they complement each other at the expense of the advancement of women.

Hartman argues that patriarchy allowed for men to control the labour of women and children and from this a hierarchical organization of control began (Hartman, 1976). Patriarchy creates a system of order and control which helps capitalism as it pursues profit .This also plays out in the sexual division of labour whereby women are given specific roles because social reproduction has become fundamental in society, and so therefore their advancement in the workforce such as being leaders, becomes inhibited by the preservation of social reproduction in a capitalist system. Men play a crucial role in maintaining sexual divisions as

job segregation allows men to keep their status and this forces women to earn lower wages constantly be dependent on men (Hartman, 1976). One of the ways in which a woman survives in society is through marriage and with that she has to satisfy domestic duties. This then keeps her in a weak position in the domestic and labour market as there is always a continuous dependence on her spouse or husband (Hartman, 1976). What this illustrates is how capitalism and patriarchy have worked synonymously to keep women in a weakened position.

Patriarchy

A crucial element which fuels capitalism and the unequal shaping of the family as mentioned previously is that of patriarchy. For Andrew Tolson, he believed that patriarchy in itself was an ideology which has been passed down from generations and that paternal authority belongs to the man of the household (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). This paternal authority has never been questioned and it is exercised by the man being seen as the head of the household and the woman being subservient towards him. With the man being seen as the head of the household he is forced to become the 'breadwinner' of the household and so therefore he is forced to sell his labour power in exchange for a wage. This then takes the man away from spending time with his family and bonding with his family because if he does not deliver as the 'breadwinner' he will not be seen as a man (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). This then means that the male labourer does not spend enough time with his own family which sets up a situation whereby men engaging in family life is not seen as important and necessary.

This then asks one to look at gender relations and how people interact amongst themselves because of gender. West & Zimmerman argue that gender construction is a day to day activity and cannot be reduced to just the biological sex of an individual (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The authors begin by looking at sex and how it is a biological element which cannot be controlled by human interaction. They then argue with the sex assigned to an individual they are immediately put into a sex category. This sex category is seen as an 'arrangement between the sexes' on what attributes, activities and behaviours an individual should and should not do because of the category they belong to. Gender then becomes a display of these various activities which have been allocated to an individual because of the sex category they belong to (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender is then about human interactions and how an individual chooses to interact with others on a day to day basis.

Gender also then becomes an expression of the sex an individual belongs to. This becomes crucial in looking at the sexual division of labour. In order to be seen as being 'feminine' our society has instructed women that they must cook, clean and look after the children.

Women have been allocated certain roles in the workforce which are subservient, cheap and highly exploitative, because being in roles of power and leadership are not seen in society as being 'feminine'. This also plays out in the types of jobs that men and women are allowed to occupy in the workplace and in their ability to challenge gender oppression. This is because they don't have a strong voice to challenge it. The role of women in hospitality and service sector jobs feeds into the idea of women being better 'equipped' in these industries as compared to men, who belong in the manufacturing and mining industries as these jobs exhibit their 'innate' capabilities because of the sex category they belong to (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This has serious implications for women and their challenge against gender inequality as one has to recognize that gender is reproduced daily and in order to alleviate gender inequality one has to look at the day to day activities that men and women do, and in which sectors of the workplace do they belong to.

In looking at South Africa the rise of capitalism has had negative impacts on the African family. With the migrant labour system being created because of the discovery of gold, African men were forced to leave their families and find work in the mines to make money to support their families in the rural areas because of limited economic opportunities in the homelands (Ramphele, 2002). The impact of this was that it forced the wife of the family to become the head of the household and to look after the children. What this then did was that it created a labour force of 'unskilled' African women as they were forced to stay in the rural areas and look after the family instead of gaining skills in the labour market (Ramphele, 2002).

A crucial element about the family in a capitalist society is that it is required to reproduce itself so that the cycle of exploitation continues (Leacock & Sofa, 1986). What this means is that the capitalist system pays the labourer as little as possible as the family will supplement the rest of his needs (Leacock & Sofa, 1986). The gender division of labour also starts to occur here whereby the role of the man is seen outside of the household and being part of the economic labour force, while the role of the woman is seen as being in the household and performing various household activities such as cleaning and looking after the children. This then sets up a system where leaving the household entirely for women and going into the

labour market is not possible as they are needed to supplement and reproduce the male labourer back into the capitalist market not only for their own needs but also for this system to survive.

With the wage of the man not being enough to help the family survive, what occurred was that women started to work outside of the household (Ramphele, 2002). This case applies to all women but in particular to African women. The small value of wages being sent back home to the Bantustans were not enough for the family to survive, combined with the factor that economic opportunities in the Bantustans were very limited because of the large number of families forced to live in small areas designated which came from the Natives Land Act. This Act forced African people to live and work on 7% of the land in South Africa in the Bantustans (Ramphele, 2002). This then set up a situation whereby African women started to participate in the workforce. For women who do work outside the household, the effects of how the duties of the family are set up put them at a disadvantage. Women still have to carry the load of doing household activities while also playing a part in the economic labour market. This then creates a double load of work even though the household work is not seen as productive work (as established previously). Women who do work in the labour market are already at a disadvantage as they do not have the experience and skills gained from being in the labour market for as long a time as compared to their male counterparts. This then puts them at a difficulty when it comes to being leaders in the workplace as they do not have the time or the skills to play this role. This will be discussed in more detail when looking at leadership of women in unions later on.

When looking at gender one must not exclude men as they too are faced with challenges because of this exploitative system. In the book *Men in Perspective: Practice Power and Identity*, Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherell look at previous theories of Marx on alienation but build on the theory by discussing masculinity and how men have also had to adjust in the workplace and home. This has shaped a man's place in society which affects the conception of masculinity. Jeff Hearn makes the argument that men themselves have also been victims of capitalism and its power relations (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). For Hearn capitalism has created this division between public life (work) and the private life of the household. With the mechanisation of work occurring and the worker being viewed as a commodity there is a sense of alienation that overcomes the worker (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). What this means is a loss of creativity and control of work is experienced by the labourer, and a sense of being replaced is felt as he is seen as a commodity which can be easily substituted with another

commodity (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). The capitalist system itself does not encourage men to be emotionally articulate and instead favours stoicism, self-control and self- discipline as good traits.

These traits are fuelled by the idea of competitiveness within the capitalist system which alienates workers from each other forcing them to be closed and separated from one other.

This form of alienation in the workplace affects the household because with the loss of control at the workplace, men may feel the need to exert some sort of control in some sphere of their lives which is the private. How this control is exercised is through women and their labour, for example making them perform household and parental duties without any help and forcing the woman to stay at home. Control over a woman's body is exercised by telling women how to dress or when to have sex. Within this context men have become both the facilitators of alienation and also the victims of alienation (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). The example can be made in South Africa whereby African men were starting to lose their jobs because of the oppressive policies of Apartheid (e.g. the Job Reservation Act) which did not allow them to advance in their fields of employment. Along with oppressive policies, the mechanizing process also adversely affected labour as it did not need a labour intensive workforce. Some African men returned to the Bantustans and started drinking so that they did not have to feel the sense of shame of not being able to be a 'provider' for their families. Combined with that they exerted control over their wives by telling them what they could or could not wear or where they could or could not go (Ramphele, 2002).

Economic Principles and the Labour Market

South Africa entered the global economic market with challenges facing it and a pressure to conform to international economic policies. The challenges facing South Africa coming out of Apartheid were that of a highly unequal society which favoured a particular race in all spheres of the economy (type of work), politics (unable to vote) and society (infrastructure , education and cultural). In looking at the economy problems started to occur even before the democratic elections of 1994. The mechanisation of production which affected all labourers globally meant that a significant number of jobs were lost during the 1970's which is when the Post-Fordist era began. Combined with this was the over accumulation of goods whereby the market was being saturated by goods unable to be purchased. This was due to a lack of

consumer demand as goods were too expensive for them or they did not have the buying power to afford the goods (Bond, 2004). This created a huge crisis in capitalism. During the early 1990's, the majority of the population in South Africa earned under R300 a month (Bond, 2004). Income distribution was uneven as 95% of those classified as poor were African, 4% were Coloured and 1% were Indian or White .Adding to that basic services such as water and electricity were not being delivered to the majority of the population (Bond, 2004: 16). The democratically elected government had to develop policies which could address these challenges while at the same time trying to compete in the global market (Orr, 2006). The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was a policy based on government playing a leading role in social development and economic growth for all was replaced with a more neo-liberal policy, that of the Growth Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR).

A shift in industrial neo-liberal economies from manufacturing, to service-sector jobs has influenced the workplace. Neo-liberal policies favour privatization and advocate that the government does not play a leading role in economic development, but rather creates the arena for investment through a reduction of tariffs when trading, but more importantly the introduction of a flexible labour workforce (Orr, 2006). A flexible labourer is created when employers must cut costs when it comes to employing workers as production costs start overtaking profits. How this is done is through re-defining the nature of a job, changing contracts or even working conditions. What this does is make it easier for employers to hire and fire workers when necessary and it puts the labourer into a precarious position, as having a steady job becomes harder to obtain and wages are lower. Over 71 000 jobs were lost in 1996 after GEAR was adopted by the government and the effects of the policy have clearly been negative (Bond: 2005). The work that comes from flexibilisation is that of part-time work (service sector), seasonal work (agricultural) and casual work (telesales). These forms of work exhibit gender patterns. Women tend to occupy these jobs a lot more as offering a low wage is justified by the notion that a woman's wage is supplementary to the man's wage in the household and so therefore does not need to be equal in line with the amount of work done. The work done by woman labourers is also not seen as valuable in comparison to the work of male labourers. Added on to that women's weak societal position means they are more vulnerable and likely to accept poor work conditions. Previously when looking at the history of women's work it was usually discontinuous and during non-stressful periods of the family when women could substitute for men (Jenson, 1988).

Secondly when looking at these jobs, particularly in the service sector, the belief that women are 'designed' to work in service sector jobs because of the hospitality element of these jobs led to a significant number of women flooding the flexible market. A feminization of work starts to occur figuratively and literally. Literally because as more women start to enter the workforce the connotations of being productive, cheap and docile are filtered throughout the economy in sectors which they occupy. This has an influence on male labourers themselves as they conform to the connotations mentioned above, as compared to previous connotations of men workers being disruptive and lazy in order to have employment. This plays a symbolic role in the workforce of today (Salzinger, 2003). What one then sees in the workplace is gender roles being reproduced at the expense of both sexes (sexual division of economic labour). During the 1970's over 44% of agricultural workers were African women. African women occupied 37% of service work (which included domestic work) and only 8% of African women were engaged in industrial, professional or clerical work (Orr, 2006: 19) For all of these different jobs the same issues of low wages and bad working conditions applied. Benefits that could have been gained from having full-time work (medical aid, pension etc.) are lost and protection of workers and their working conditions is also lost as they do not have the power to object as they are not full-time workers (Orr, 2006).

Another effect of the neo liberal principles has been the emergence of a dual economy. The dual economy occurs as a result of loss or inability to attain formal employment. Therefore with this loss, other forms of employment are created which are not characterized by formal employment such as a contract between employer and employee, benefits that could be possibly gained and also a lack of enforcing certain labour practices such as the Labour Relations Act or the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. Now a dual economy is nothing new in South Africa's labour history but this new economy has created the formal and informal types of work. In the article entitled *Eroding the Core: Flexibility and the re-segmentation of the South African Labour Market* Eddie Webster and Bridget Kenny argue that the dual economy is nothing new. During Apartheid there was the primary labour market which was made up of white skilled workers and the secondary labour market which was made up of African unskilled workers. The dual economy operated on racial lines (Webster & Kenny, 1998). In between these two markets was the subordinate primary labour market which was made up of Coloured and Indian workers who were semi-skilled. Both the subordinate and secondary labour markets were used to produce profits and goods for the primary labour market while earning poor wages. With the end of Apartheid and the

introduction of flexible labour, a different form of a dual economy was envisaged. In the first tier of the labour market you have a situation where the focus is capital intensive, the wages and benefits are high and there is low employment. The second tier of the labour market is characterized by having low barriers of entry into it, is very labour intensive and has a strong investment sector (Webster & Kenny, 1998).

The vision of what the dual economy can be has not completely come into being. What you have is a situation where there is formal work which can be characterized by benefits, formal contracts, low wages and union presence while the informal type of work is characterized by no contracts, no benefits and even lower wages. According to the Labour Force Quarterly 2 656 000 labourers were engaged in informal work ('Labour Force Quarterly' www.statssa.gov.za, accessed on 8 May 2011). Of those nearly 3 million informal workers, 1 242 000 were women ('Labour Force Quarterly' www.statssa.gov.za , accessed on 8 May 2011).

The dual economy has had devastating effects for workers as a whole because restructuring within companies has occurred which has thus created the casual worker. The casual worker was introduced because of the demand by capitalism to cut costs on production which meant the labour force. The demand came from the longer working hours established by numerous companies working in many sectors of the market such as retail. These companies introduced working on Saturdays and Sundays so that they could make even more profits. The casual labourer is different from the part-time labourer as he/she does not receive many benefits and does not have protection because they are not seen as being fully legitimate workers. They only work when needed in pressure situations whereby part-time or full-time workers cannot handle the amount of work during that particular season (Webster & Kenny, 1998). What this then creates is a situation where you have core workers who are full-time employed and periphery workers who are casual or part-time. This creates competition between the workers and it also creates challenges to unionisation amongst workers because of job insecurity. The creation of the casual worker has been beneficial to companies as dismissing a worker is easy as workers do not have the resources to lay a grievance. Secondly companies don't have to deal with the issue of promoting workers as this is not discussed because workers are never in the same position long enough to bargain for a promotion (Webster & Kenny, 1998).

Some of the ways in which government has tried to play a mediation role between trade unions and companies is by having certain labour acts which are meant to benefit the worker and not put him/her in an exploited position. The first Act which was established by the new government was that of the Labour Relations Act of 1995. This Act provided for a national minimum wage, that rights of unions be recognized, the worker must not be discriminated against and that collective bargaining can occur in the workplace if needed (Labour Relations Act, 1995). With the increase in casualisation of work, implementing this Act has been a challenge. The first issue is that only a 'representative union' is entitled to basic organizational rights. Casualisation does not allow for unions to grow in numbers as they do not have permanent employment and so therefore gaining basic organizational rights is hard for some workers as they are not recognized within the LRA (Nyman, 1997). The LRA itself states that one can only have meetings concerning collective bargaining outside of working hours. (Labour Relations Act, 1995). This then makes it hard for some workers to have meetings as they have household duties to attend to and cannot afford to be having meetings after working hours. This particularly pertains to women workers who have the second shift of working in the home to complete after working in the economic market.

The one benefit which can be noted from the LRA is that any bargaining which does occur is centralized. This then means that workers who are organized or who are not organized can benefit from the outcomes of the bargaining process (Nyman, 1997). This is a good result for women who are casual workers as they usually are not organized and some are in seasonal work, but they can still gain benefits from the centralized bargaining process. The problem occurs for women who engage in formal work as this benefit cannot be fully exploited, as competition between permanent and casual workers does not allow for solidarity to occur within the workplace, and so therefore agreeing on certain issues affecting workers will not occur which could be raised at the collective bargaining process.

Another Act which is designed to benefit workers is that of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA). This Act stipulates the maximum hours of work that can be done, conditions within the workplace must be of a certain level, remuneration must be fair and that an employee cannot be dismissed without following certain procedures (Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997). This Act is also meant to benefit the worker so that he/she is not exploited. A critique of the Act is that it only benefits workers who are 'organized' and so therefore workers who work in the informal economy or who are in casual jobs, cannot benefit from this Act as one cannot go to an official worksite of the informal economy as it is

constantly changing and moving around depending on where the work is (Nyman, 1997). This issue particularly pertains to woman labourers as many of them tend to work in casual jobs and are in the informal economy (specifically those working in the service sector). A very significant critique of the Act is that the employee and the employer can negotiate amongst themselves the types of conditions that can occur at the workplace (Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997). This then makes the Act ineffective as the Act is left out of the decision making process between employer and employee. The consequences of this for working-class women workers is that they tend to be the most vulnerable of workers who are desperate for any type of work so they enter into an agreement which is not beneficial towards them and actually exploits them even more by either putting them in dangerous working conditions, or by making them work longer hours without the just remuneration (Valodia, 2000). An example can be made of domestic workers who are unable to organize because of different workplaces which hinder building solidarity amongst themselves. These women, then because of the downward variation of the BCEA, would be forced to work overtime without the proper compensation.

The challenges then facing the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) were and continue to be many. When it comes to trying to organize workers the federation has found that membership has decreased since the last decade (Buhlungu, 2010). During the late 1980's and the early 1990's, the membership of COSATU increased from 712 231 members in 1987 to 1 317 496 in 1994 (Buhlungu, 2010:90). This can be explained from the fact that the labour movement was a critical component in defeating Apartheid and many workers believed that change could come from organizing within the movement not only to defeat apartheid, but also to change working conditions and wages which were not of good standard, particularly for African workers. With the introduction of neo-liberal economic policies mentioned before into the South African economy, particularly casualisation of work, organizing of workers started to decrease as unions could not be effective for all workers because of the precarious nature workers found themselves in. In 2000 the membership of the federation was 1 869 000 workers and in 2003 the number was 1 768 000 (Buhlungu, 2010; 90). The number had increased in the beginning of the new millennium, but a significant drop in the number of union members occurs only three short years later. When looking at one the affiliates of COSATU, which is SACCAWU, it is interesting to note that from around 1991-2006 the membership has increased but it has also been stagnant. In 1991 the membership was 97 000 and by 1997 it was 102 000. From 1997- 2003 the membership

stayed the same at 102 000 but interestingly the number increased in 2006 to 108 000 (Buhlungu, 2010: 172). This could be attributed to the fact that SACCAWU has been at the forefront of trying to eliminate casualisation in the workplace, particularly in the retail industry where casualisation and part-time work is high. In 1993 SACCAWU was able to negotiate with various retailers on a flexibility agreement which converted some casual workers into permanent workers (Webster & Kenny, 1998). SACCAWU has also been successful in organizing some casual workers into the union. The problem arises, however, when it comes to negotiating at the bargaining council where casual workers and their needs are not discussed but rather permanent workers needs are discussed and negotiated for (Webster & Kenny, 1998). This then creates tension between workers, which is still experienced in today's workforce, as workers who could be organizing together in solidarity are divided because of the neo-liberal economic policies.

There are numerous challenges facing all workers, when looking at the economic situation they find themselves in. For women the situation tends to be even worse as they are vulnerable, less skilled, so therefore are highly exploited in this specific economic labour market. Men have also experienced challenges in the workplace as more and more of them are losing their full-time work and being replaced by women part-time or casual workers. In the home the role of the woman starts to change as she is not only engaged in household work, but also engaged in the economic labour force. This creates tension in households as men fear that women will not be able to fulfil their expected household duties and be part of the labour force at the same time and so they are not always encouraging of women working outside the household (Lawson, 1985) This could be because men may feel threatened by their spouses earning more than them which affects their perceptions of masculinity.

Leadership

Women who occupy roles of leadership face many challenges. Wendy Luhabe looks at the experiences of black managers in her book *Defining Moments*. The corporate sector provides an example of some of the challenges that the labour sector also experiences. During the 1970's and 1980's gender and race were interweaved in the corporate sector and so the issue of race played a predominate role as compared to gender (Luhabe, 2002). During the 1990's at the end of Apartheid black women started to occupy positions of management. Most of the men were not supportive of women being in charge as they wanted to see women fail in

leadership and prove the theory that it is not in a woman's 'nature' to lead (Luhabe, 2002). This has forced women from then until now to work harder at their jobs and to gain confidence in the work they do so that they prove their male colleagues wrong. This can be translated to unions as women still have to prove themselves even more than they should because they are women. Another issue affecting women in leadership is the lack of role models. There are not enough women in leadership positions so other women are not inspired to lead. The constant turnover of labour means that one has to constantly re-train individuals and this does not produce consistency in creating leaders (Luhabe, 2002).

Secondly amongst women, Luhabe noted that there is the 'holdback' syndrome where women do not want to see other women being successful so they try to keep them in junior levels and not senior levels which they are currently occupying (Luhabe, 2002). Tsomondo argues that there are four levels as to why women are underrepresented in organizations. The first reason as explained previously is the individual. Women do not have the necessary skills and knowledge in order to be successful as a leader as compared to men who have been in the workforce longer and have gained the skills and knowledge (Tsomondo, 2010). Secondly the interpersonal space is considered because of the social roles both men and women have come to occupy. Trying to integrate women into leadership roles in the workplace is inconsistent with society's gendering of roles as leadership is the domain of men. Thirdly men keep women out of informal networks (social gatherings) which are important in gaining influence and recognition (Tsomondo, 2010). An example could be made of men organizing to have drinks after work, unaware that women have to go home and take care of their children. This limits the influence a woman might have in leadership roles. Lastly the culture and environment of the organization can prevent women from succeeding. In this case the union has a very masculine culture to it which limits women from achieving leadership positions. All of the above mentioned issues could apply directly to women in unions.

For women in the unions, the main problem that seems to occur is the times scheduled for meetings in which critical decisions will be made usually occuring at night time and at inconvenient locations (Beale, 1982). This is a hardship for women as they cannot always make those meetings as they have domestic work to attend to and transport is not always provided for. This then does not allow for women's leadership to grow in the unions as women will not be fully informed to be able to stand for leadership positions.

Masculine Nature of Unions

It has been argued that patriarchy has influenced the way in which unions organize themselves with men leading and women playing a subordinate role. Kirton and Glover look at the history of unions in the United Kingdom and the United States of America and how they have a "masculine nature". Unions historically have had a strong link with paid work and achievement in this field (Kirton & Glover, 2006). This is important as non-paid work (domestic work) was not seen as an issue to fight for. This then sets up a situation whereby already women's work in other spheres of society is not recognized and this is not appealing to women. Secondly unions tend to be "anti-feminine" (Glover & Kirton, 2006). What this means is that displaying of emotions and relating on that level is not seen as worthy in a union. Rather the strong aggressive attitude is praised in a union (Glover & Kirton, 2006). This is difficult for some women to relate to as women have been socialized to not be aggressive. The sexism that exists in unions whether it is the subtle language, a male-defined bargaining agenda, which is when issues that are bargained for are set by men and issues that affect women are limited from the bargaining table, or as simple as how men and women sit in a meeting discourages women from taking part in leadership activities (Kirton & Healy, 1999). This type of behaviour has been reproduced and this continues the masculine nature of unions.

Tsomondo (2010) cites Tshoaedi and Hlela (2006) in arguing that the dominant male supremacy culture in trade unions in South Africa has meant that the subservience and discrimination of women continues. COSATU built itself on black worker liberation. This then means that issues of gender have fallen behind the issue of racial solidarity. Buhlungu (1999) argues that in the beginning of the struggle, officials performed various tasks and so there was no gender division of labour in the unions which meant that there was no unequal distribution of power. As the unions became larger, tasks had to be performed by specific individuals and women usually occupied roles which were in their 'nature' usually associated with hospitality and administration. Men who are leaders in the union are able to shift their domestic responsibilities onto their wives or girlfriends, but women cannot do the same. This has meant that structural exclusion from leadership roles has occurred for women where they feel disempowered and are seen by their fellow male colleagues as women who work, but primarily must take care of domestic work and not be involved in leadership structures of the union (Tshoaedi, 1999).

In order to address the leadership issue, unions have to go past the idea of just adding women onto collective bargaining councils. This model is only a short term goal and does not deal with the structural changes that need to occur in a union. A transformation of the organization has to occur where practices, norms and values reflect a gender balanced perspective. Women in unions need to have sufficient training in how to deal with concerns and issues that arise in the workplace and they must be structurally supported when engaging in this type of work (Dickens, 2006).

Another critical tool which could help in more women being represented in leadership roles is a quota system. COSATU affiliates such as National Education, Health Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) and the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) and other unions such as South African Railways Harbours Workers' Union (SARHWU) have chosen to use the quota system along with the gender education programmes (Orr, 1999). Both of these tools have been helpful in addressing gender inequality in terms of leadership in the different unions as more women are provided opportunities to be in leadership. This is because the unions have a fixed percentage in their constitution for women to occupy these positions (Orr, 1999). Challenges occur when trying to implement the quota system as not all members of the various unions are in favour. Another challenge that was found is that women are used by men in unions to vote against quotas (Meer, 2002). This pits women against each other and ultimately leads to their own lack of development and leadership. Nonetheless this example clearly shows how having a quota system along with gender education programmes can be very helpful for the union in addressing gender inequality.

Kirton argues that in order for the union to be successful it has to recruit more women. Kirton looked at the Manufacturing, Science and Finance (MSF) union and how women are central in retaining women members as they help in creating a 'women friendly' image of the union (Kirton, 1999). Women who are still active in the unions have chosen to stay as they believe in what the union is doing (protecting workers from exploitation) and continuing this legacy. Secondly women activists stay as they want the union to work for them. This is important as having more women in decision roles will make the issues affecting women a priority and this will make more women join. Lastly women who are leaders stay in the union because of their feminist beliefs which promote gender equality (Kirton, 1999). This is important as women activists are passionate about the issues affecting women in the workforce and this is crucial in recruiting women members. This is significant when looking at SACCAWU where the majority of members are women.

Organizing Women in a Separate Space

The argument to organize in a separate space is nothing new in dealing with gender inequality. One must be careful to note that women do not mobilize simply because they are women. Different contexts, common shared identities and values influence women into organizing together. Maxine Molyneux, quoted in Hassim (2006), argues that there are two main reasons as to why women organize in separate spaces. The first relates to strategy. Women organize together as they have a shared interest in defeating power which limits their agency (Hassim, 2006). Secondly women organize together because there is a shared identity which occurs because of the gender division of labour which unites women together. An example can be made of motherhood and how the responsibility of looking after the child is 'expected' to be done by the woman in the relationship which is unfair.

In her article entitled *Gender, Social Location and Feminist Politics in South Africa,* Shireen Hassim looks at the women's movement during the struggle era of apartheid and why at times they have not been successful in addressing "women's issues". During apartheid most women's organizations/movements were under the greater umbrella of the political liberation struggle. What this then did was that it subordinated the issues affecting women (childcare, sexual harassment etc.) as the political liberation of the majority of South Africans was the crucial issue (Hassim, 1991). Within women's movements based on political lines a patriarchal theme still dominated discourses as women were seen as the 'mothers of the nation' (Hassim, 2005). What this then did was that it immediately limited the scope in which women could begin to challenge gender relations in the workplace, family and political movements as they were only viewed in this one role. This is important particularly for post-colonial countries as the outcome of being part of a broader liberation struggle has meant that an autonomous women's movement is constantly null and void . During political discussions and debates, the connotations of being a nurturer and being responsible of the household came through from this simple quote (Hassim, 2005).

Compounded onto this was the belief that organizing as feminists was a Western and middle class ideal and did not resonate in post-colonial countries. In the new dispensation women have started to retreat into 'safe spaces' (churches, co-operatives, local community social movements) from politically associated women's movement such as the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) as they feel that their issues are not being addressed

(Hassim, 2005).The organizing which has occurred has had a feminist theme underlying it as women have again engaged with how gender relations occur in various spheres of society and how they are unequal towards women (Hassim, 2005). 'Safe spaces' have been seen as a positive step forward in addressing gender inequality because it is in these spaces that women can discuss their beliefs and values together and find commonality (identity). It is in these spaces that women do not have to feel censored because their male counterparts will object to their opinions. It is also in these spaces that women can begin to articulate their own points of view and begin to address the challenges and power imbalances facing them independently from any political association or from any patriarchal ideology (Hassim, 2006).

In Europe, North America and Britain trade unions recognized that they had to adopt new strategies in order to increase membership. Women join unions for collective support and not necessarily for money disputes (Glover & Kirton, 2006). In developing nations women are under-represented in leadership positions, particularly in the United States of America (USA) where 40% of union members are women, but they are highly under-represented (Glover & Kirton, 2006). Most of the unions in these countries have chosen to organize women in a separate space when dealing with gender inequality. Most of the unions in Europe have a women's committee and in the UK there has been a shift towards a separate space for women in unions (Glover & Kirton, 2006). Greene and Kirton look at two unions in the United Kingdom and how having women-only spaces has helped improve gender inequality (Greene & Kirton, 2002). The MSF union which has 33% of its members which are women and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) which has 20% of its members who are women, recognized that during the 1980's and 1990's membership had decreased and new ways of attracting workers had to be adopted, particularly women workers (Greene & Kirton, 2002). The unions were able to understand that bargaining agendas and the culture of the union was mainly dominated by men and needs of women were not being addressed. The unions embarked on having courses and training for women and many of the women interviewed for the research found that the courses were helpful. Women were able to relate to one another and have a shared understanding of knowledge and experiences (Greene & Kirton, 2002). What this course did is that it allowed for women to participate in the unions and to give a gendered experience. Many of the participants interviewed found the courses useful and it gave them more confidence in the workplace and unions (Greene & Kirton, 2002). This illustrates that women-only courses allow women to identify themselves as an oppressed group, but it also allows for them to gain confidence and belief in themselves and

to participate even more in the union. In a recent COSATU Report the challenges facing women-only spaces is that they tend to be under-resourced, unsupported and marginalized (COSATU(b), 2006). Most of the affiliates of COSATU do not have a full-time Gender Co-ordinator who is dedicated to gender work. Another issue is that there is policy which is there, but with the male culture still dominating in the unions no meaningful organizational change can occur (COSATU(b), 2006).

Lastly, it is believed that having more women as activists will allow for diverse issues to be brought to the table in regard to policy and negotiating with management. There are still challenges that face any activist in an organization. Workplace restructuring and the different labour laws do not allow for organizers to effectively do their job. For women organizers, they face another challenge as they are not always taken seriously in meetings and workshops and have to constantly prove themselves (Yanta, 2002).

The literature then suggests that the challenge has been in linking the different networks of organizing together as resources and capacity are limited in these spaces. Another issue is that surface change of gender equality appears to be occurring in various spaces, such as the increasing in numbers of women in the state, but radical transformation of the patriarchal society we exist in has not occurred as the link between woman issues and broader struggles in society has yet to be established. Cultural preferences still exist in society which tend to favour men and this is a challenge to organizing in separate spaces.

Conclusion

The literature has shown that different factors such as the family, the economic principles of the current market and patriarchy have significantly influenced the subordinate role that women play. This has influenced behaviours and actions of organizations and individuals. It is for this reason that a separate space has been created in SACCAWU so that the inequality that women experience from the household to the workplace can be discussed and challenged.

Research Methods

Research Design

The research conducted was qualitative in approach. A. Strauss and J. Corbin define qualitative research as being a non-statistical method of gathering data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The topic being discussed required qualitative research as opinions, ideas and experience on the decision to organise women separately had to be done with interviews, participant observation and analysing of documents.

The outcomes of qualitative research are many. Firstly qualitative research allows one to describe a situation or social organization (Peshkin, 1993). In quantitative research you are looking for results which can be generalized, with qualitative you are constantly looking to describe those generalizations and how they have come into being (Peshkin, 1993). The descriptive aspect in qualitative research was useful for me as I was looking to understand how the separate space for women in SACCAWU came into being and how have people's attitudes and beliefs been to this space. Qualitative research also allowed me to look at relationships, settings and situations in greater detail (Peshkin, 1993). In looking at relationships I was able to observe union members in their settings and how they relate to one another, particularly how men and women relate to one another when the topic of gender inequality is discussed.

Qualitative research also allowed me to look at the process of development and evaluation of the gender policy of SACCAWU. This was crucial for my research as I was able to research how the policy came into being, who was involved in the policy formulation and how has it been implemented in the union. Evaluation is also important in qualitative research when looking at policies and practices (Peshkin, 1993). I was able to evaluate the implications of having a separate space for women in SACCAWU and has it been successful in addressing gender inequality in the union. Understanding and clarifying complex situations is beneficial in qualitative research (Peshkin, 1993). Gender inequality is a complex occurrence that is present in our society. It has influenced all spheres of South African society from organizations to individual's beliefs and behaviours. It was important that I grappled with this issue in a qualitative manner so that I could understand how it is that gender inequality comes into being in the union, how it has become entrenched in our society and how individuals are

trying to overcome it. I was able to get access into SACCAWU through the assistance of the National Gender Co-ordinator of SACCAWU Ms Patricia Nyman who allowed me to interview union members and participate in gender workshops.

One has to be observant in interviews and also in meetings where the research is conducted (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was very useful for the research particularly when I had to attend the National Congress of SACCAWU in October 2011. As the researcher I had to be observing the number of people who attend in terms of sex categorization and race. I always had to be observant of people in relation to the topics being discussed at the Congress particularly when it came to the issue of gender inequality. Observation of body language when interviewing research participants and when attending the Congress was used greatly in this research. Many of the participants interviewed demonstrated a lot of their feelings through body language and I as the researcher had to have this skill fully attentive.

The sacrifice that one makes when choosing qualitative research instead of quantitative research is that uniformity on the conclusion will not be reached as one will be dealing with interpretations and experiences which cannot be categorized into a survey (Weiss, 1995). Listening was also an important skill which was used in my research. One has to listen to what is not only being said, but what is not actually being said (Weiss, 1995). As the researcher who is researching a sensitive topic such as gender inequality I realized that my listening skills had to be attentive as people were not always forthcoming in telling me their experiences at first but slowly opened up.

Research Instruments

The research instruments which I used were in-depth interviews with women and men within the trade union of SACCAWU and participant observation. Interviews for union members were semi-structured made up of mainly open-ended questions which helped me in my conversations with the respondents. The semi structured interviews allowed for all respondents to contribute freely and allowed me to keep a similar line of interviewing with all respondents. The semi- structured interviews also allowed me enough flexibility to ask new questions to respondents during interviews, but overall I maintained the general framework of the questions which were followed.

Asking questions in a standardized manner but still open to change allowed for bias to be eliminated (Patton, 1990). This allowed me to eliminate the problem of having more comprehensive data from certain interviewees and less from others. It also allowed me to group certain data together and identify themes.

Different types of interview questions were given to different types of people within the organization. This was important as each group of people (National Executive Committee, Shopstewards, and Gender Co-ordinators, Organizers and general members of the union) provided different information which was vital for the research. It was important to ask the different types of groups their opinions on the strategies taken by the union on dealing with gender inequality, whether they think gender inequality is an important issue or why gender workshops are important. It was also important to ask the different groups specific questions on gender inequality. An example is how men were asked if they think dealing with gender inequality is an important issue. Answers to this question were important because it revealed what some men think about the issue of gender inequality and how this belief is translated in day to day actions of some of the men in the union. Another example is the women who were part of the Gender Empowerment Programme (GEP) and what their opinions were on the programme and whether it was useful to them. This is important as it evaluates the progress the union has made in dealing with gender inequality from members who went through a gender programme.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is a method in research where a researcher is intensively involved with the people and the cultural environment which they are studying (Laurier, 2010). This requires an individual to spend a period of time with interviewees participating in activities and also being aware of behaviours that may help the research. I was able to have informal interviews and direct observations of individuals at National Congress and I was able to analyse the gender policy of SACCAWU. I also participated in the Defence for Life Campaign workshop, a campaign targeted at young women and it strives for young women to fight for decent work conditions, a healthy work/life balance and to develop their own leadership skills (SACCAWU(e), 2011). Attendance at this workshop allowed me to understand how sexual harassment occurs in the workplace and how SACCAWU members are trained to deal with this. The project did not allow spend a lot of time with participants,

but I was allowed to participate in workshops and also I was able to go to the SACCAWU Head Office and observe the work culture within the union.

Profile of Interviewees

According to Patton qualitative research usually focuses on an in-depth small sample. This allows for more details to come from the research (Patton, 1990). The research involved 18 respondents: 3 National Executive Committee Members (1 woman and 2 were men), 1 National Gender Co-ordinator, 5 shopstewards (3 men and 2 women), 5 organizers (all women, 3 came from the Gender Empowerment Programme of 1998), 3 ordinary female members and 1 ordinary male member. The majority of the respondents were women as I wanted to gain their experiences on having a separate space and has it been successful according to them. I wanted to interview men as I wanted to know what their opinions were on gender inequality in the union and what they think of the decision to organize women separately. Interviewing shopstewards was important as I wanted to see if they had adequate resources to deal with their responsibilities and whether the union was doing enough in regard to helping women in the workplace and ensuring that their rights were respected.

Data Collection

The interviews were conducted in person between the period of June 2011 and March 2012. All interviews were done in English and at times in Zulu. This allowed for respondents to express themselves and not be inhibited by English. It also allowed for the respondents to not feel inhibited and feel that the interview was formal. It allowed for the respondents and me to trust each other as speaking in Zulu allowed us to relate better to one another which was helpful for the research. Audio recording was done with the consent of the respondents. Interviews were all one-on-one, in private, at a venue chosen by the interviewee which was usually their place of work. Observations were done at the National Congress and detailed notes were taken. Interviews lasted approximately between 30 and 45 minutes.

Ethics

In dealing with the issue of gender inequality in a union, I had to ensure that the principles of good social science research were reached. The first principle is autonomy of the research participants (Wassenaar, 2006). This was achieved in the research by ensuring that each research participant interviewed, voluntarily consented to the research and a letter was sent to the participants informing them what the research was about. No loss of dignity or respect was achieved in the research as I was always aware to keep participants' experiences and opinions confidential in my research. Nobody was harmed in a physical or emotional way in the conduction of my research as participants were respected at all times (Wassenaar, 2006). The participants will benefit from the research as I will make it available if necessary for the participants to know what the opinions and experiences discussed in the research were about. Participants were picked in a fair manner as there were no favourites. I had access to as many participants as I wanted to and I chose fairly to represent different views on my research topic.

A consent form was given to participants before they were interviewed which guaranteed anonymity but for national officials they agreed to be named in the research. Confidentiality was reached in the research by ensuring that the transcripts from the interviews done were stored in a safe (Wassenaar, 2006). No participants were forced to be interviewed if they did not want to be interviewed.

Findings and Analysis

This chapter will look at the motivations behind why SACCAWU chose to organize women in a separate space and whether this has been a successful strategy. The chapter will look at the challenges facing women members in the union and whether the separate organization has helped them to confront gender inequality. One of the first attempts to deal with gender inequality in the union was through the Gender Empowerment Programme (GEP) which began in 1997. This programme was important as it was the first attempt to organize women in a separate space and to capacitate them with the skills necessary to deal with gender inequality in the workplace, broader society, and the union. This will be discussed later on in this chapter as well as an evaluation of whether or not this programme was successful. Other perspectives from male union members and National Executive Committee Members on the separate organization will also be discussed.

A History of Tackling Gender in the Union

The union recognized that gender inequality was an issue which it had to focus on as a priority, as when compared to other unions, the sector which SACCAWU organized in is mainly women. During the late 1980s the union recognized that women were being dismissed from their jobs because they were pregnant or were not given fair dismissal claims like their male colleagues. The union has fought for Parental Rights and Maternity rights for both men and women (Forrest, 2005). It was also during the late 1980s that the union recognized that in order to deal with gender inequality in the home, union and workplace, it would have to target women specifically and empower them. Therefore in 1993 a full-time gender co-ordinator was employed and from that a gender department was created which would deal with gender issues, but having specific attention on gender oppression experienced by women. This does not mean that men are excluded from the process of dealing with gender issues, but more focus is given on empowering women and ensuring that they have the necessary skills and confidence to deal with the challenges affecting them in the workplace and at home.

The gender department is configured in a specific way: The National official occupies this role full time and ensures that the programmes agreed upon by the union are implemented within the union. At regional levels, officials only occupy their gender roles on a part-time basis. This again highlights how gender is seen as an adhoc issue and a priority that needs full-time attention and not part-time attention by union members. There is a regional gender chairperson and a regional co-ordinator. At the local level there are not many gender officials and usually the work is done by organizers, who are mainly men. At company level it is shopstewards who are gender officials. All of these different officials co-ordinate and provide overall direction to the union's gender programmes and activities. They must organize campaigns which the department runs. They must ensure that they build strong and vibrant gender structures within the union (SACCAWU(f), www.saccawu.org.za, accessed on 18 June 2012) .

SACCAWU Gender Policy

SACCAWU's current Gender Policy is one of the most important and focussed strategies aiming to deal with, and eradicate, gender oppression in the union. Over the years, discussions amongst union members, officials, and experts on the issue of gender equality led to resolutions and decisions which were gathered and formatted into a draft. From that a policy draft was adopted at the 1st Gender Conference in 2010. The Commission at the Conference discussed the policy and made amendments to it and sent it out to the regions for discussion. From there it was taken to the Central Executive Committee in 2011 and then through to the National Congress for adoption. The process was thus inclusive of all structures in the union. Noting the centrality of this gender policy in the broader strategies of the union to effect change with regard to gender in the union (and the workplace), this report will focus on key aspects of this policy, questioning whether they have resulted in any tangible changes thus far.

Definition of gender

SACCAWU, like COSATU, has defined gender as 'socially constructed and culturally defined relations between men and women' (COSATU Gender Policy, 2011: 3). SACCAWU recognizes that patriarchy is firmly rooted in our society. Patriarchy is a social system whereby the man is the central authority and the woman is subordinate to this authority (Hartman, 1976). In order to eradicate gender inequality in society, a consciousness needs to be created when discussing this issue and women need to be central when addressing the issue. This is significant as the union has chosen to focus more on women than men and addressing the oppression which they experience. They have achieved this by having workshops, training and campaigns which are mainly targeted at women. This is good as it allows for women to have the space to discuss issues affecting them which are not always addressed in the other structures of the union as a respondent said, 'having this separate space allows us to truly discuss challenges facing us and not be afraid to speak' (Woman Organizer, Interview, 8/11/2011).

Aims

In the policy, the union aims to advance gender equality by empowering women and by having more women in leadership positions (SACCAWU Gender Policy 2011). The union envisions a society where women are able to participate freely in all spheres of society without any forms of oppression from men or other women. The second aim of the policy is a mainstreaming of gender within the union (SACCAWU Gender Policy 2011). This means gender consciousness must be in the daily thinking and activities of the union from financial meetings and policies to educational meetings and policies and not seen as an ad hoc issue which is only discussed in a gender space. The policy also aims to educate both men and women on the gender oppression that occurs and to re-educate them in a manner which challenges tis oppression.

Strategies

(i) Organizational Structure

The ways in which the union intends on addressing gender inequality is by including more women in leadership positions. It intends on achieving this by having a growing number of women represented in delegations, committees and activities in the union. The union would like the Gender Committee Chairperson and gender co-ordinators to be represented from local to national levels of the union. The union wants more women to stand for shopsteward elections. The emphasis has been made by the union that it would like young women casual workers to stand for election in the workplace and union. This is important as the neo-liberal market has introduced flexibility in the workplace which has created the casual worker, and eroded workers' rights (Orr, 2006). The majority of casual workers are women in the retail sector, so the union has identified this as an opportunity to increase not only women leadership of the union, but to grow the membership of the union at the same time, and improve the position of casual workers on the shop floor. This is an important strategy in increasing membership of the union as it has struggled to do this and also by targeting young women who occupy casual-work positions.

The Gender policy advocates for regional gender co-ordinators to be full time co-ordinators instead of part-time co-ordinators (SACCAWU(b), 2011). This responsibility would require gender co-ordinators to implement relevant activities which the union has agreed upon. Currently regional co-ordinators are engaged in other work of the union and do not have the time or capacity to deal with gender issues effectively on a part-time basis. They also want a fully functioning national gender co-ordination department which has its own separate budget and funds. This is important in ensuring that gender issues become mainstreamed within the union.

(ii) Sexual Harassment

The union wants sexual harassment to be completely eliminated from the workplace and in other spheres of society. The policy advocates for the SACCAWU Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures to be implemented in the union. This policy is taken from the Employment Equity Act of 1998 which gives a clear definition of what sexual harassment is and how an employer or worker must follow procedure when dealing with this issue (Employment Equity Act, 1998).

The union would like more education and for awareness to be raised amongst staff members and structures. Training on sexual harassment is also advocated by the policy and creating an environment whereby cases of sexual harassment are taken seriously and there is zero tolerance on the issue (SACCAWU (b), 2011).

(iii) Education and Training

Education and training of women members is critical in order to address inequality within the union. The policy advocates for more education on women's role and participation in the union. This will be achieved through mentorships, workshops and empowerment programmes. Training of women and men elected officials must be done so that they are able to deal with the responsibilities required of them.

Parental Rights is an important issue for the union to tackle. The union would like both men and women to be able to engage in waged work and also to have a full family life (SACCAWU(b), 2011). The union wants the Parental Rights policy to be used in negotiations. The union would also like for more parental rights education to occur within the union. The union would like for childcare facilities to be provided for at the workplace. This is important when looking to empower women as the recognition of the 'double shift' must occur and both men and women must participate equally in the household.

(iv) Transport

With competition amongst companies at its highest, extension of trading hours has been introduced. This has had a detrimental impact on workers. For example, proper transport at night for workers has not been given and women workers have experienced crime against them (SACCAWU(b) 2011). The union wants free, reliable and safe transport provided to workers. The union wants a campaign to raise awareness on this issue.

(v) Fighting Discrimination on the basis of Sexual Orientation

The union recognizes that it has members who are gay or lesbian and may face a form of discrimination because of their orientation. The union wants to fight against this discrimination by making sure that gender structures in the union create an environment

whereby members can discuss their sexual orientation without fear or discrimination. This issue came up when discussing attendance of men at gender workshops however it was not the focus of this research.

Gender Empowerment Programme of 1997-1999

The gender policy is not the first attempt in dealing with gender inequality within the union. The policy is informed by many meetings, discussions, workshops, resolutions and programmes that the union has run over the years. One of the first programmes that the union had in addressing gender inequality within the union was that of the Gender Empowerment Programme (GEP) which started in 1997. This programme has influenced why the gender policy continues to advocate for a separate space for women in order to deal with gender inequality. SACCAWU, in assistance with Khanya College, recognized that previous empowerment programmes were once off and did not build a foundation for future women leaders to grow (SACCAWU(c), 1998). It was with this thinking in mind that the GEP programme would be a 3-year programme where specific individuals would be targeted and would be equipped with the skills and analytical theory to handle themselves in the union and the workplace when dealing with gender inequality and to replicate these ideas in their respective workplaces (SACCAWU(c), 1998). The aim of the programme was that it would raise consciousness amongst fellow workers about gender inequality and this would raise consciousness within the union. The first year of the programme would focus on basic gender training and would provide skills on this topic. The second year would have workshops and training on economic literacy and collective bargaining. The final year of the programme would train union members in policy formulation (SACCAWU(c), 1998). The union would achieve this by equipping women shop stewards and officials with the necessary skills to take forward struggles of women workers in the workplace. The union also wanted women shop stewards to bring a gender dimension in bargaining processes (SACCAWU(c), 1998). Thirdly the union wanted women to have confidence in themselves to be able to participate in other issues such as the economy and not feel marginalized. Lastly the aim of the programme was that it wanted to develop organizational capacity and skills for women so that they could participate in leadership positions (SACCAWU(c), 1998).

The union chose to organize women separately for various reasons. Firstly it recognized that women were unable to express themselves and voice their opinions with a majority of men in the room as they would feel intimidated (SACCAWU(c), 1998). The union took the decision to organize women separately so that they could express themselves without feeling intimidated by men in the room and gain the necessary skills from the programme. Secondly the union targeted mainly women because they were a sector which most needed the organizational skills and education on union activities as men in the union had those skills already therefore, it was critical that women had to be the centre of the programme (SACCAWU(c), 1998).

The union targeted mainly women in this programme but because more men were regional education co-ordinators, they were part of the programme as well but less than women overall. This is important as it highlights the first space which was organized for women separately. Secondly what this highlights is that organizing women in a separate space is a challenge within the union, because leadership positions are mainly held by men so trying to only target women will not be achievable. Finally unions tend to be masculine in nature so therefore trying to only target women will not always be achievable as the space women are organizing in has a culture of men being present in all places. The union dealt with this challenge by having women only who participated in the 1st year of regional workshops attend the national workshops of the programme. This then meant more women would be coming to the national workshops as compared to men.

In the second and third year of the programme, more emphasis was made on targeting women into the workshops and slowly the number of women in the programme began to increase (Interview with Ms P Nyman, 18/06/2012). The interest of men deteriorated along the way during the programme as women became more assertive and wanted to have their voices being heard in a space created for them specifically and also because more of the issues discussed in the programme began to be looked at from a women's perspective and this alienated some men from the programme. The last year of the programme on collective bargaining was only for women and it became a project for women. This shows how the union dealt with the challenge of organizing women in a separate space with men being a majority by pulling more women into the programme and by having specific workshops (collective bargaining) target women only. This example shows how one can achieve a separate space for women in a masculine space such as a union, by targeting women and making the agenda beneficial towards women.

In speaking to the national gender co-ordinator, Ms Nyman, she agreed that the programme has been successful. Ms Nyman commented that

> this programme allowed us to put serious emphasis on women and allow them to be empowered and grow within the union. This was the foundations for the capacity building of the gender department. It is still a challenge, but the programme was helpful in creating the building blocks which we still use today. Many women members are starting to occupy positions of leadership and they are gaining skills which they can use not only in a gender workshop but also in a finance workshop and in their daily lives (Nyman,P. Interview 4/04/2012).

There were 400 women who were part of the programme in the beginning. 250 women finished the whole 3 year programme. In interviewing 3 women who were a part of the full 3 year programme, they indicated that the programme was helpful for them. All of the women interviewed have become senior organizers within the union. One woman organizer from the West Rand branch of SACCAWU said:

> the programme helped me in that I started to grow in my job. I was first a normal worker at OK Bazaar (which is now Shoprite Checkers) and when attending this programme I believed in myself as I had the knowledge and skills so I put myself up for leadership positions. I was not scared anymore as I knew I could do the job. I moved from being a shopsteward to National Gender Chairperson with the help of this programme. I find that I can facilitate in a group of men and not feel scared as I believe in myself (Woman Organizer, 26/03/2012).

Another woman who is an organizer in Pretoria commented that the programme has been useful for her. The organizer said:

> that workshop was very important for me as I gained a lot of confidence and it also gave me facilitation skills. Not only did the programme focus on women's issues but it also taught me about the economy and how it affects me as a woman in the workforce. I became Deputy Chairperson of the Gender structure because I believed in myself and I knew I could do the job well from the skills I learnt from the programme. I have even used the knowledge outside of my workplace and in my church where I am the Provincial Secretary of Mothers (Woman organizer, Interview 26/03/2012).

The last woman that I interviewed on this programme who is an organizer in the Mpumalanga region said that the programme was helpful because:

> before the programme I had a low self-esteem about myself in my job. The programme gave me confidence and built me as a person, as the skills I gained allowed me to be an organizer today within the union which is an important job. I have even become a mentor to other young people not only in the union but also in my community and I want to pass on the knowledge I was given in the programmes (Woman organizer, Interview 26/03/2012).

What all of the 3 participants of the programme indicate is that this programme helped them to gain confidence and believe in themselves and their capabilities and to apply for leadership positions in the union and not leave that duty for men alone. The programme also equipped the women with the necessary skills in order to be successful in the workplace. Lastly the programme allowed for women to not only use their new skills gained in the workplace, but also in other spheres of their lives.

Challenges in the workshop were mentioned by respondents. The organizer from the West Rand branch commented that "resources were limited and we did not have enough money when the programme was being run. We now have ensured that there is a gender budget that includes money for programmes like this one (GEP)" (Woman organizer, Interview 26/03/2012). The organizer from Pretoria said "one of the big challenges were the men in the programmes. Some of them did not want to participate in the course and they found it a waste of time so they would try and distract us in the meetings by asking stupid questions. Team work was an issue at first but we overcame this and worked together as a team" (Woman organizer, Interview 26/03/2012).

The success of the programme has to also be evaluated in terms of what is going on in SACCAWU presently. In looking at the numbers of women in leadership, this has grown over the years. In 1999 only 17% of National Office Bearers were women and in 2010 that number was 33%. Central Executive Committee Positions held by women were 17% in 1998 and now they are 27%. In 1998 Chairpersons of the different regions of the union were all held by men, in 2010 13% of those seats are held by women (SACCAWU(g), 2010). One might argue the numbers are not that huge in terms of difference but it clearly represents a significant increase of women in leadership positions. This highlights how ingrained issues and relations of patriarchy are, and how difficult it is to navigate around the issue of gender

equality. As mentioned earlier, women now occupy 50% of shopsteward duties in the union. This is significant for empowering women as the first point of leadership in any union is the shopsteward level. Having a gender budget being part of the overall national budget for the union indicates a shift in thinking. The union over the years has recognized that gender, like any other department in the union, deserves to have a budget allocated to it in order to be successful. This also indicates how seriously the union is taking this issue. Ms Nyman also commented that when she organizes workshops on gender, lots of women come through. This highlights how more women are participating in these workshops and are gaining significant skills from them.

In spite of this human resources is still a challenge and in the policy it aims to address this issue by having full-time gender co-ordinators (SACCAWU(b), 2011). With regard to programmes, gender mainstreaming is important. This means that gender must stop being seen as an adhoc issue, but must be included in all sectors of the union when critical decisions are being made. Changing consciousness on how members view gender issues was critical in trying to address gender inequality. Changing consciousness continues to be a big issue whether it is men in the union who do not believe women should lead, or in changing day to day language and behaviours that members exhibit in the union. This will take some considerable time as the deep-rooted patriarchal society will not disappear over a period of years.

Separate Spaces for Women in the Union

As mentioned previously the union wants special attention to be paid to women when addressing gender inequality. The union organizes mentorships and programmes targeted at women so that they are capacitated and educated in the union and workplace. The decision to organize separately was part of the strategy which is to empower women (SACCAWU(b), 2011). In interviewing the national gender co-ordinator, Patricia Nyman she said "we had to organize women separately so that they can have a space in which to discuss their experiences and not feel intimidated" (Nyman, P. Interview 4/04/2012). The Secretary General of the union, Mr Bones Skulu commented that "the union is organized in the hospitality, banking and service sector which is mainly occupied by women. The union

recognized that women were at a disadvantage not only in the workplace but also in broader society in terms of education, skills and the double workload of housework and work outside the house" (Skulu, B. Interview 28/03/2012). The Deputy Secretary General, Mr Mduduzi Mbongwe, also commented that a motivation for organizing women in a separate space is so that "we could begin to capacitate and educate women in order for them to be equal in line with their fellow male colleagues" (Mbongwe, M. Interview 30/01/2012).

When asking workers who work in the union they all gave similar reasons for a separate space. One of the reasons for a separate space was that the environment in which women are working in, particularly the union, is a male dominated space. This is the case even though the majority of SACCAWU members are women. This has to do with the fact that leadership positions within unions tend to be male dominated in general and so the issues affecting women will not be fully discussed or given a woman's perspective in leadership meetings which influence the aims of the union. This then influences the culture of the union as certain topics are given more priority, specifically when it comes to issues affecting women (Glover & Kirton, 2006). One female organizer within the union felt that the voices of women were not being heard in the union and so they needed to have a safe space where they can discuss issues affecting them, particularly when it comes to the issue of sexual harassment. This issue is very sensitive and women need to feel safe in order to raise this issue.

Another reason that the union organized women separately is, as mentioned before, the need to build confidence in women as leaders. The union recognized that by having women in a separate space, they could open themselves up and talk freely, but also not be intimidated by other male colleagues who believe that a woman should not be in a position of leadership. The union wanted to create a space where women are not intimidated and could develop their self-esteem and begin to see that they are as competent and equal to their male counterparts and that they can occupy positions of leadership. This follows in line with the other reason for the separate space as issues affecting women need to become mainstreamed within the rest of the union. The union is trying to change consciousness about gender inequality and it is aware that it has to begin with women as they are the oppressed and so they have to begin to change how they view themselves. This informs the need for a separate space.

The way in which this separate space is created is through the targeting of women members. The union and the gender department makes a conscious effort in organizing workshops, educational programmes or events with issues affecting women to be discussed in these

spaces. The workshops which occur take a female's perspective and look at how women are affected in the workplace. An example can be made of sexual harassment. The workshops on this issue mainly look at it from a woman's perspective and how she experiences sexual harassment in the workplace and from there she is educated on how to deal with this issue.

Success

The success of the separate organising space has to be looked at from two perspectives. The first perspective would have to be from the perspective of the National Executive Committee. Ms Patricia Nyman, believes that organizing of women in a separate space has been very beneficial as the confidence women have gained in raising and discussing issues related to gender and other issues has grown considerably. For Ms Nyman one of the most important successes of organizing women in a separate space when dealing with gender inequality is that women are able to support each other. In her words, "When women have frustrations about education for their children or frustrations at work, they can discuss it with one another and support or give advice to one another" (Nyman, P. Interview 4/04/2012). This is important as it allows women to relate to one another and also it fosters strong bonds between women which is important when trying to build leadership. This is also important as it allows women to identify common issues which are affecting them and then begin to address them and not have them seen as an adhoc issue but as a serious priority in this separate space. However, tensions persist between women as not all women are in support of each other and do not want to see each other succeed. A respondent made a comment that "not all women are in favour of gender equality as they are gaining the benefits of the current system. They are in positions of power and do not want to see other women on their level" (Woman member, Interview 12/03/2012).

(i) Rights won for both women and men

Another success of the separate space is that certain rights have been won for both men and women. During the 1970's and 1980's workers went on strike for rights for workers - particularly workers who were parents (SACCAWU(d), 2000). At first it was called mothers' rights as women were the first to discuss the issue, but it then became parental rights. The Parental Rights Agreement ensures that pregnant women will not be discriminated against in the workplace and that both men and women should have enough time to participate in both their careers and in the family. Pregnant women also must not be in contact with harmful chemicals or machinery which might endanger the baby (Parental Rights Agreement 2000).

This is important as it indicates that men and women should play a significant role in their families and not leave this duty to women only. The Maternal Rights Agreement allows for women and their partners to have certain days off when she gives birth or when her child is sick when he/she (infant) is between the ages of 0 and 9 years. This again highlights the role that men should play in the household. Both of these rights show how issues affecting women can become mainstreamed in the union and made into a serious priority for the union and not seen as an adhoc issue.

(ii) Women in leadership positions

The role of women in leadership has also grown as more women are occupying shopsteward roles on the shop floor which is the most important point of leadership in a union. 50% of shopstewards in the union are women (Bones, S. Interview 28/03/2012). 46% of local office bearers are women (SACCAWU(b),2011). This is significant as women are occupying these important positions and from them they can move into higher positions of leadership within the union which will increase their representation and can begin to bring forward the issue affecting women even more in the union.

When asking women members of the union if the separate space has been successful they also agree that it has been. A Female shopsteward at the National Congress said, "in my own experience I speak better in gender workshops and forums than in other spaces as I am confident in myself". Other respondents also felt that having the separate space allows for women to talk about what their day to day experience is as a worker and they relate better to each other. A woman organizer was quick to add "the gender forums must be changed to women forums and women discuss their issues and there must be a forum for men where they discuss their issues and from that both bring their issues to the gender forum" (Woman organizer, Interview 25/11/2011). What this indicates is that absolute space for women to organize is not fully achieved as men are still part of the gender forums which target women. Secondly it highlights how when trying to deal with gender inequality men have to be included as they are part of the process in achieving gender equality as gender, its construction and understanding involves both men and women. I asked Ms Nyman why it is that the separate space is created in theory but not in practice. Ms Nyman said:

> as the union we recognize that having absolute separate organization will not occur because we are in a union with male members and gender does involve both men and women. The point of targeting mainly women in these spaces is that we recognize that

> women are not on equal level with men in terms of skills and education. We first have to ensure that women are on an equal level with men and then we can begin to have discussions on both men and women issues. I say this because if we allow men and women to be in these spaces equally, men who have the skills, education and confidence will dominate the discussion and women will continue to not have those skills and education needed in the workplace (Nyman, P. Interview 04/04/2012).

(iii) The importance of gender workshops

The gender department within the union runs campaigns and workshops during the year. One of the campaigns which I attended was the Decisions for Life Campaign. As mentioned earlier this campaign is targeted at young women and it strives for young women to fight for decent work conditions, a healthy work/life balance and to develop their own leadership skills (SACCAWU(e), 2011). When interviewing the respondents at the workshop many of them agreed that having this workshop and other workshops in the union were important, and useful. A female member from Edcon said she found the workshops useful as "it informs me on my rights and what I should and should not take from management. It also informs me on how to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace which is important" (Women member, Interview 15/02/2012). An organizer who was also at the workshop commented that "having these workshops allows for issues affecting woman to be discussed and to be made a priority unlike when you have education workshops and the issues affecting women are not discussed at all"(Woman organizer, Interview 25/11/2011). A shop steward from Makro said "I find that I am able to discuss things that I would not be able to discuss in other workshops. I enjoy how it also focuses on young women which is me" (Female shopsteward, Interview 25/11/2011). This type of campaign is important as it raises awareness amongst women on their rights, gives them the skills to handle difficult situations in the workplace, which is a sign of leadership, and this empowers them to challenge the status quo. What this also indicates is that a space created to discuss issues affecting women is important as it allows women to relate to one another and to be able to discuss certain issues which they could not freely discuss in other workshops.

When it comes to the general meetings on gender information at the workplace, women members found it to be helpful. A women member commented that "when we have meetings we discuss issues on pregnancy and sexual harassment and how it affects workers or we discuss issues such as day-care and how we are going to deal with this not being at the

workplace. This is helpful to someone like me who does not always know what to do". A shopsteward from Edcon said "I recently had a sexual harassment case brought to me and I was able to deal with it with the help of the gender workshop which told me to follow specific procedures in dealing with the issue. Even the lady who was sexually harassed, was confident with me and her case has gone to CCMA" (Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration) (Female shopsteward, Interview 14/10/2011).

An organizer in the union commented that the workshops and meetings held at the workplace can also be beneficial towards men, at many of the workplaces: "I do workshops, some of the male workers come up to me and say that they have been sexually harassed but do not know what procedure to follow. If they attended the gender meetings or workshops which I do they would know what procedure to follow, but they are afraid they will be called gay if they attend the workshops" (Woman organizer, Interview 25/11/2011).

This example highlights the mindset which is still entrenched in some men in the union who think attending gender meetings or workshops is only beneficial for women and not men which is not the case. This example also highlights how a hegemonic masculinity exists whereby the idea of a man engaging in issues affecting women and trying to address them is not seen as the normal behaviour of what a man is. It perhaps could also highlight how homosexuality is not seen as a normal sexual orientation and hence those who are homosexual may be afraid to attend the workshops as they might experience discrimination and those who are not homosexual do not want to be associated with that sexual orientation in any way.

The importance of having gender workshops is that the workshops go even further than just focussing on what affects women, but they educate women in many other ways. An older woman organizer within the union said that the "gender workshops gave me good writing skills on how to write a report. The workshops also discuss issues of shopsteward education and finance education" (Woman organizer, Interview 26/03/2012). According to the national gender co-ordinator, the gender workshops discuss all aspects of the union which affect a worker but from a female perspective. This is important as it emphasizes how gender issues need to be mainstreamed in the union and not looked at as a separate issue which is the second aim of the gender policy. The workshops are important as a male shopsteward from Pick n Pay said "gender workshops are important because they educate women on how to handle situations in the workforce. I will give you an example of sexual harassment. The

training offered at these workshops allows women to be able to deal with this issue if it comes up in the workplace. They also train women in getting skills which they can use in the workplace" (Male shopsteward, Interview 22/03/2012). Another man who is a shopsteward and is held in high regard in the union commented that:

> women need to capacitate themselves so that they are confident when discussing issues in the workplace. I believe that having workshops or meetings on gender allows for women to be empowered. I sometimes attend the meetings so that I know what is going on. It is important (Male shopsteward, Interview 15/02/2012).

Both of these examples indicate how men themselves view women's empowerment as necessary in order for them to succeed in the workplace. The latter example indicates that men can participate in gender workshops and meetings which are targeted mainly at women as they can learn how women experience inequality in the workplace.

One of the older female organizers commented that on the issue of sexual harassment she found that not only did she gain the skills necessary to deal with sexual harassment, but she gained confidence to the point that she even wrote a page in the 'Violence Against Women' booklet. This respondent has even recruited other members to come to the programmes so that they can gain the skills and belief in themselves as she has over the years. The workshops are also important as some of the men interviewed said that it informs them on issues affecting woman such as maternity rights and parental rights. A male member from Pick n Pay believed that in attending the workshops not only did he learn about issues affecting women, but he also learned how he could use and access his rights as a father in the workplace. The respondent said "I found the workshop very useful as I never knew that I could also take paid leave when my wife has a child. She has to also work at Pick n Pay which she did at the time" (Male union member, Interview 13/03/2012).

One of the most important reasons that the workshops were useful is that it gave women a sense of belief. A respondent commented that attending the meetings and having workshops encouraged her to believe in herself. The woman who is now an organizer said:

> at first I was nervous and would not speak in meetings. The more I worked with people and the more I came to the meetings on gender I started to change my belief and started to believe in myself and that there is no difference between a man and a woman only physical features. This has made me more confident in my job and I am

not afraid to speak in front of men and feel intimidated (Woman organizer, Interview 08/11/2011).

Another organizer said that "in my job I constantly have to stand up and present in front of workers and inform them of what is going on in the union or recruit member. I was so scared when I first got up, but I took all the skills that I learnt in gender workshops and I did my job and was not nervous" (Woman Organizer, Interview 25/11/2011).The workshops are important as they provide a space where woman can gain confidence in themselves and a space where female leaders can grow. Examples of women going further than just the union are Edna Molewa, the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs and the late Alina Rantsolase who was a Minister of Parliament. Both came through the gender structures of SACCAWU and went through the different phases of leadership and have become successful leaders not only in the union movement but also in South Africa.

Challenges

(i) Women in Leadership Positions and Self-Belief

There are still challenges that affect the decision to organize separately such as having gender co-ordinators from local to national levels of the union as they can only occupy this position part-time. As mentioned before this highlights how gender is seen as an adhoc issue and not as part of all sectors of the union that requires full-time attention.

The Deputy General Secretary commented that "women have internalized gender oppression and so they do not believe they are competent" (Mbongwe, M. Interview 30/01/2012). What this means is in their day to day activities women do not see themselves in leadership positions as they believe in the idea that men should lead and not women and that is the 'norm' hence challenging this 'norm' is a continuous struggle.

A shopsteward from Makro said that "women still do not have belief in themselves as leaders and do not think that other women should be leaders" (Female shopsteward, Interview 25/11/2011). This thinking takes a while to be changed as it is reinforced by the patriarchal society which we live in. Raising awareness about this has to occur and one of the ways in

which the union is doing this is through the organization of women in a separate space. Ms Nyman remarked that:

> the union has taken a two prong approach in dealing with gender inequality. The first is empowerment of women and the second is mainstreaming issues which affect women. Both of these have been a challenge as it requires changing the consciousness of members and the organization which takes time (Nyman, P. Interview 04/04/2012).

The shopsteward at Makro commented by saying "not all of my male colleagues want women in leadership positions as this will threaten their positions of dominance in the union. They feel very threatened by someone like me who challenges them on certain issues which they as men have all agreed upon" (Female shopsteward, Interview 25/11/ 2011). An example was made by the shopsteward working at Makro of how previously meetings were held after working hours but as shopsteward she challenged this and wanted meetings to be held during lunch time as not all members could make the meetings in the late afternoon or night because of parental duties or lack of transport. Most of the male members did not want the shift to occur as they wanted their full hour lunch break and so they complained. Fortunately it was passed. Another example is from my observations at National Congress. During the Organizational Commission it was agreed that by 2016 over 50% of Chairpersons in the regions should be women. When this resolution was discussed in the Congress it became a heated debate as most of the representatives at the Congress (who were mainly men) did not want this resolution to be passed as they believed it was unfair for men in the union. Unfortunately it was not passed. Both of these examples highlight how raising gender consciousness is a challenge and trying to contest current ways of organizing is met with apprehension which is then a challenge in meeting the aims of the gender policy of eliminating gender inequality in all spheres of the union.

(ii) Attendance of Men at Gender Workshops

SACCAWU has held (and holds) a number of workshops as part of its gender programmes. These have included 'The Decisions for Life Campaign', 'Childcare facilities at the workplace' and '16 Days of Activism.' While it is mainly women who have participated in these workshops, there have sometimes been attempts to include men. In the gender policy it recognizes that in order for gender mainstreaming to occur, men have to play a significant

role but the policy must still focus on women (SACCAWU(b), 2011). Men occupy the majority of crucial leadership positions in the union therefore making men aware of the inequality that women experience is critical. During the National Congress of 1989 and the Gender Conference of 2010 recognition of how men also experience inequality has been identified, in issues such as paternity rights. Most of the men who were part of this research said that they do attend workshops. When I asked why, one respondent said "as a shopsteward I have to attend so that I am informed about what issues are affecting my fellow women workers. I attend to keep up to date" (Male shopsteward, Interview 13/03/2012) When speaking to female organizers they had a different opinion. One organizer said that men do attend workshops, but only if it will take time off work with paid leave. The organizer even said that 'I now have to incorporate issues of gender into the workshops because attendance for gender workshops is very low' (Woman organizer, Interview 25/11/2011).

It may seem as though some men in the union do not take issues of gender seriously and rather use the workshops as time to get off work and not to engage in the issues being discussed. Another issue of men attending workshops is that the female organizers who run the workshops feel that the men do not take them seriously but objectify them. This perhaps could be because of the patriarchal beliefs entrenched in our society which do not want to see women in leadership roles (this case an organizer) and this perhaps made the men feel uncomfortable with a women being in a leadership position and educating them instead of the reverse. The organizer said "you will think that they are to paying attention to the issues, but you will find that they are looking at you in a sexy way and then at the end of the meeting they will ask for your phone number" (Woman Organizer, Interview 25/11/2011) This highlights the issue of men not taking women seriously as leaders and also the objectification that occurs of women because of the entrenched patriarchal beliefs on how a woman should be treated.

Another organizer also commented that men who do attend the workshops are usually gender coordinators or shopstewards who are forced to attend the workshops not because they want to attend the workshops. This also extends to the workers of SACCAWU whereby one organizer commented that fellow colleagues do not put up notices or reminders when it comes to gender workshops. This highlights again the issue of how gender inequality is not seen as an important issue by members but rather a secondary issue in the union. This then creates a huge challenge in trying to address the issue of gender inequality and to change

consciousness. This is a challenge for the union as mainstreaming gender within the union is the overall goal of the policy. Members have to be conscious in their day to day activities of how gender inequality occurs. By not sending through information on gender workshops or meetings, it is a huge challenge for the union in reaching the goal.

(iii) Leadership

(a) Quota

The subject of having a leadership quota system in trying to address gender inequality in the union is one which is very complicated and has many members of the union on different sides of the debate. The official standpoint of the union is that a quota system should not be implemented. Reasons for this are that the union believes that having a quota system would be window dressing the issue of dealing with gender inequality and not actually addressing the reasons as to why more women are not in leadership positions in the union. When speaking to Angie Phehle, Deputy President of the union, she recognized that historically the union has failed to capacitate women in order for them to become leaders. With the gender empowerment programmes put in place now, these will help women in becoming more confident and have the abilities to occupy leadership roles. Ms Phehle gave the example of the Western Cape and Wits region and the fact that it has 50% female Regional Office Bearers (ROB).The General Secretary of the union also argued that if one is to have a leadership quota you will find that people who occupy positions of power will not be qualified and will not be successful in their jobs and this will go against what the union is trying to do in dealing with gender inequality. Mr Skulu argues that "the fruits of the gender programmes will bear themselves as compared to us forcing the issue" (Skulu, B. Interview 28/03/2012).

For the male members of the union who were interviewed, they were also against having a quota system. They believed that this would be 'forcing' the union to put women in positions of power even if they are not qualified. A shopsteward from Edcon working at Bedford Centre even said "we can't be led by women; particularly if they are not qualified this will be the wrong direction for the union" (Male shopsteward, Interview 15/02/2012). Women members of the union who were interviewed in this research take a different perspective. What they have found is that regardless of whether a quota system

is put in, women who are in leadership roles still do not play that role effectively; instead they are used as a token by male colleagues. A shopsteward from Makro gave an example of how she was taken to a negotiations meeting and she was not asked for her opinion just to observe and show that a woman was there, 'I felt so stupid. I thought that I was coming to the meeting to contribute and help with negotiations, but I was not allowed to say anything, only the men were allowed to participate and get their opinions across' (Female shopsteward, Interview 25/11/2012), the respondent said. Another woman who is a worker at Pick n Pay found that when she was in meetings with her fellow male colleagues she would be asked to make tea and run errands and get paper and take notes, but not be involved in the meetings. She found this frustrating as "I have been trained by the union and have the skills but when it comes to negotiation meetings or any executive meetings my skills are not used, instead my skills as a 'woman' are used" she commented (Female member of the union, Interview 27/03/2012). These 'skills' of a woman would be being hospitable and serving fellow colleagues and not engaging in the serious discussions which is what some women members have been trained to do.

One of the more convincing reasons for having a leadership quota when looking at gender inequality came from Ms Nyman, who argues that a quota system could be used as a tool in addressing gender inequality. Ms Nyman argues that while nobody wants to window dress the issue of gender inequality, having a quota system parallel to gender empowerment programmes, could help address this issue seriously and not take it for granted. Women could use the skills that they have learned in the empowerment programmes in their leadership roles.

(b) Women President of the Union

There has never been a woman President of the union since its inception in 1975 when it was still CCAWUSA. The union has had a woman as a general secretary (Emma Mashinini), but it has never had a President who is a woman. When asking women members about this, they did not know that fact at first and were shocked when I told them this. The male shopsteward from Edcon said that the main reason for this is that women do not believe in themselves, 'you will find that when it comes to electing a shopsteward, women will not stand up for election or when they do other women will not vote for them' (Male shopsteward, Interview 15/02/2012) . When I mentioned this issue to the women of the union who did know they said that they feel frustrated about the

issue. The shopsteward from Makro commented that "our Deputies in the union are women and it is clear that they can do the job well, but we (women) are not given the chance to be President." In discussions I held with the respondent her frustration manifested itself by her saying;

"I have found that in SACCAWU if you are a woman and you talk a lot and you have potential they will suppress you and sweep you out the door unless you do sexual favours. I try by all means and I know I am capable but they still do not give me chance (Female shopsteward, Interview 25/11/2011)." An Edcon shopsteward highlighted how women are used as a token in forming allegiances. The shopsteward commented that "men will only take you to meetings if you vote for them in elections. They want you to sleep with them so that you can get that position. They don't want you for your skills or talent" (Female shopsteward, Interview 14/10/2011). This perhaps indicates the idea that women still face challenges and they have to use sex to get ahead instead of their work abilities. What this shows is that women do have the potential to lead, but they are not given the opportunities. If they are given opportunities, they have to engage in sexual activities which undermine their work capabilities. What this also indicates is that sexual harassment continues to be a challenge which the union has to deal with.

Ms Nyman felt that a leadership quota, if used correctly, would be ideal in this situation as it would break the glass ceiling that women find themselves in. At the same time she was quick to add that "our president is a good leader it just so happens that he is a man. What do you do in this instance when you want a woman to lead the union?" (Nyman, P. Interview 04/04/2012) An interesting point was made by an executive member of the union, that as a collective, the executive works together and that all six members have equal power when it comes to decisions. The executive also highlighted that having two women as deputies is a huge accomplishment. SACCAWU is one of the leading affiliates of COSATU which has women as deputies and as female presidents in the regional levels

It is clear that the issue of having a woman as a president is complex. One would like to have a competent leader at the helm of the union, which is what they currently have, but at the same time one would like the union to truly be representational of its members when it comes to its leaders. The union has a culture of being patriarchal which is known of unions, so the environment of discussing having a woman as a president is not seen as important. Not enough support is given to this issue because of the good quality of

leadership currently in place. The potential for a woman to be a President is there in the union, but overcoming the culture of the patriarchal union is still a challenge.

I believe that while the union does not want unqualified people to be in positions of power, at the same time, in not having the quota system, it does not recognize how serious the issue of gender is. The union has made significant strides in putting women in leadership positions, and granted having women in leadership will take time and will not occur in a second, but there needs to be more motivation when dealing with this subject. It is clear that for women on the ground, putting them in leadership positions is not enough, as they still face the challenge of convincing their male counterparts

The idea suggested by Mr Skulu of how time will reveal women leadership is an example of the entrenched beliefs and ideas of a patriarchal society we live in and how changing those beliefs is a huge challenge. Just as the men who were interviewed do not believe it is a woman's 'nature' to lead both of these examples indicate the internalization process of patriarchy and the effects of this society are heavily set in the mind of individuals that it showcases itself in the language of how they intend on dealing with gender inequality or by not dealing with it at all, which is the effect of this type of society. Patriarchy is a structure in society which has influenced how we think and what we say that subconsciously, we reproduce it in how we speak and how we view others even when we think we are challenging the structure. In order to challenge this it requires looking at our everyday activities and how we speak and changing ideas and language which reproduce this structure.

Men alone are not responsible for women not being in leadership positions; women themselves also have a role in this deficiency. Another reason for the lack of female leadership is that other women do not want to see their fellow women colleagues succeed. This is highlighted by a respondent who said "Other women do not want to see fellow female comrades succeed. I believe that they feel threatened especially older women. They do not want young women in leadership roles because then what will they do?" (Union member, Interview 21/10/2011). Another respondent who is an organizer within the union commented that "Older women feel threatened by us as we are highly motivated and we want to use our skills but they think we will take their jobs from them. They keep us at a distance to protect themselves and their jobs" (Woman Organizer, 25/11/2011). This indicates that some women members feel that leadership of women is

not growing as older women feel threatened by young women coming into the union. This also indicates the fact that leadership is not only about men vs. women there is also an element of older women not being receptive to a growing number of young women in leadership as this would mean younger women in leadership positions and this makes some older women apprehensive for their own job safety. This example also highlights how ingrained the beliefs of patriarchy are that amongst women divisiveness ensures that women do not grow in leadership and challenge the status quo.

(c) Partners who are not supportive

Even though SACCAWU has chosen to organize women separately in dealing with gender inequality and empowering them, women still face challenges in their domestic lives as partners are not always supportive of their spouses being heavily involved in union activities. All of the young shop stewards whom I interviewed said that their partners were not supportive. At a workshop which I attend a young woman brought her daughter with her. I asked her why her partner did not look after the child and she told me that he would 'freak out' if he was left alone with his daughter. An organizer commented that her partner does not like it when she goes to the meetings at night and he wants her in the house as it is not safe at night, "we constantly argue about this and I tell him that it is my job so I have to go. At least now meetings are not too late (Woman organizer, Interview 8/11/2011)." Being a women in a leadership is not only challenging in the workplace , but also in the home as these women constantly have to balance these two sites of work.

(d) Belief in oneself

One of the most hindering factors for women not being in leadership positions is the lack of belief. In conducting the interviews and in attending the National Congress of Congress 2011, I observed that the women in the union still have this belief that men are meant to lead and that women are meant to follow. At the National Congress, the majority of the representation was men even though as mentioned previously over 70% of the union is made up of women. In the Organizational Commission which I was a part of, many of the women in the room were quiet; it was the men who dominated the

conversation. The majority of the women who were talking were the older women or those who were on the panel of the Commission. A reason for this could be that they have been in the union longer and so over time they have learnt how to express themselves. This is indicative of union culture which respects the opinions of older members of the union more as compared to younger members who have only begun their activities/work in the union and so their experience is limited as compared to older members. When asking interviewees as to why women were not in leadership positions, one of the male respondents said, "women do not believe that they can do as good a job as their male comrades and so they feel that their male comrades must lead instead of them leading" (Male member from Pick n Pay, Interview 13/03/2012). What is interesting about this comment is that a man in the union is conscious of what is occurring in regard to women not leading and wants to understand the situation.

The shopstewards who were women had a hard time convincing not only men, but also their fellow women comrades. An example was given of a respondent where none of her fellow workers came to her to discuss any issues that they might have in the workplace, instead they went to another male shopsteward, "this was very hard for me, as it made me think that maybe I could not do my job. I just had to persevere and over time my workers came to me for help. It was hard" (Female shopsteward, Interview 14/10/2011). This highlights the idea that belief in women not being leaders is disputed by both men and women members in the union.

A possible reason why older women were able to express themselves and have belief in themselves comes from the history of the union. With the first General Secretary of the union being a woman (Emma Mashinini), women during the early days of the union were able to express themselves and give their point of view a lot more. The workers struggle, which was part of the Apartheid struggle, had in its wing the issue of gender empowerment and many women committees were created in this movement. With the focus being on globalisation and the impact it has on workers, (bad wages, long hours, bad working conditions etc.) the empowerment of women took a backseat to the union and these issues featured more even though this issue of casualization has affected women the most as they are the one who generally occupy these positions. This has had an impact on the young women of the union as they do not feel that they are able to voice their opinions and they do not feel as if they have the right to. In interviewing one respondent she said, "you want to say something in the meetings, but you are afraid that

people will shut you down or no one will take you seriously. You then start to think maybe you are not qualified to speak" (Woman Organizer, Interview, 8/11/2011). It becomes very obvious that the gender programmes being run by the gender department are important as they will build confidence in the young women to speak their minds. It was noted by Ms Nyman that one of the young ladies who was recently a part of the gender programmes, grew in confidence and she in the Organizational Commission was speaking up and expressing her point of view on various matters. When I spoke to the young woman she indicated to me that when she first joined the union she did not say a word in meetings even though she wanted to. After some time and with attending the gender programmes, she gained confidence in herself and she now feels that she can say what she wants, as she aptly put it "no one is going to kill me so I must express my opinion."

One still has to face the challenge of men in the union who do not believe that a woman should lead a union or be in leadership positions. The attitudes of men in the Organizational Commission at the Congress when discussing gender was distinctly disinterested. As compared to the other issues discussed in the Commission such as strikes or recruitment of members, many of the men in the Commission did not speak as much on the gender discourse and how the union is going to improve its policy in addressing gender inequality. The women also in the Commission did not seem too interested in the subject which highlights the issue that women themselves do not see gender equality as a huge priority in the union, rather issues of wages and strikes are seen as more important. This perhaps might suggest that for both men and women gender equality is a secondary issue and not as important as wages.

(iv) Recruitment of young women

As mentioned earlier in the gender policy, recruitment of women is important when trying to address gender inequality (SACCAWU(b), 2011). In my observations at the National Congress one of the biggest issues raised at the Organizational Commission during the National Congress was that the recruitment of young women into the union is very low. This is significant as the retail sector, which the union organizes in, is made up mainly of young women. One of the issues for low recruitment is that young women do not feel as if the union

is beneficial towards them. A woman organizer said, "I will try to recruit them (young women) but they say that the union will not help them in anyway. All we do is strike" (Woman Organizer, Interview 08/11/2011).The organizer from Germiston also agreed with her colleague by saying "young women see the union as a place for grumpy old people and why would they want to join that? They constantly call us the 'lost generation' why would you want to belong to a union that calls you this?" (Woman Organizer, Interview 25/11/2011). Both of these examples highlight the issue that the union is not portraying the proper image in recruiting women. The union is not doing enough to educate young women on the benefits of joining it such as campaigns and programmes which will empower them in the workplace.

The organizer from Germiston continued by saying "another issue which is affecting recruiting of young female workers relates to labour brokering. In order for a union to recruit a worker they must have an employee. The practice of labour brokering does not allow this by having rules such as part-time and flexible labour. When a worker is only guaranteed 3 months of work until the contract is revised, a union cannot sign up a worker because there is no full-time employer" (Woman Organizer, Interview 25/11/2011). This quote indicates how the neo-liberal principles have not only created the flexible worker, but have made it difficult for workers to join unions or even for unions to recruit members which is critical not only in terms of the gender policy, but also for the union as a whole. This has an effect on ensuring that more casual workers, which are mainly women, become shopstewards and develop their leadership potential which is critical in addressing gender inequality.

(v) Resources

Resources in the union are a vital asset in order for the union to achieve its objectives. The question was asked if shopstewards have enough resources from the union in order to do their jobs efficiently. The shopstewards who work at Pick 'n Pay said that there were sufficient resources for them. One male shopsteward said "if ever we need any type of resource or help, the union is always there to help" (Male shopsteward, Interview 22/03/2012). When it came to asking whether the union gives enough resources in regard to issues affecting women such as campaigns (pregnancy, parental rights, health etc.) shopstewards interviewed again said that the union does do enough. An example of breast cancer was given by a shopsteward who said that the union was able to bring in a clinic to come through and do breast scans and

educate workers on breast cancer. General members of the union believed that they do have enough resources particularly when it comes to strikes and raising awareness on campaigns.

At the Organizational Commission at the National Congress a male shopsteward was quick to point out that some of these resources are not used in the proper manner and are just put in the offices and nobody uses them. "You will find that Dis-Chem leaflets will be printed in thousands, but no one is distributing them and the strike was 2 weeks ago. This is a waste of resources which could go to other campaigns in the union" (Man shopsteward at SACCAWU National Congress 20/10/ 2011). The leaflets are for workers to distribute to shoppers and management when they are striking explaining why it is they are striking and what changes they would like to occur in their workplace and also for the public to have sympathy for them when they are striking. The reason for this is that striking for wages is seen as the priority issue in negotiations, so when members strike, more resources are invested than are needed, which results in a waste of resources. Some of these resources can be used in raising awareness on the campaigns that are being run by the gender department but gender is seen as a less important issue as compared to wages.

For those who work within the union an opposite view was given. Respondents interviewed believed that they do not get enough resources in order to do their jobs. Organizers interviewed believed that it is always hard to ask for resources, particularly when it comes to gender workshops. Issues of technology (computers, laptops, cellphones) and transport came up. Organizers time and time again raised the issue that they do not have the adequate resources in order to do their jobs. One organizer felt that when she asks for resources such as having a car, members in the union look at her as if she is crazy and remind her that she is employed by the union and not a member. Organizers interviewed had to open up e-mail accounts in their own personal capacity and this puts them at a disadvantage when trying to communicate with members. Another organizer made the comment that when it came to using her cellphone to call members and recruit she does not have enough airtime in order to do her work properly. The union gives her a specific amount (usually R250) and once that amount is used up she (organizer) has to use her own money to recharge her cellphone and the union is delayed in paying her back. One organizer even said "please tell me where else does something like this occur where you have to pay for resources and then you have to fight to get your money back. I cannot do my job effectively" (Woman Organizer 25/11/2011). This then means that organizers cannot do their work properly, and in this case when it comes to running gender workshops.

When interviewing Ms Nyman she believed that the budget is not large enough but her frustration is usually with human resources not financial resources. Most of the gender co-ordinators do not do this job full-time but rather work part-time. The role is usually occupied by shopstewards who have many responsibilities to take care of and so they can't give their full attention to being a gender co-ordinator. When speaking to the Deputy Secretary General he acknowledged that resources as a whole in a union are limited which affects all departments of the union including gender. Mbongwe argued that one must be context specific, "when we are having a National Gender Congress then more money will be allocated in that specific year as a Congress does not occur every year. We allocate money accordingly" (Mbongwe, M. Interview 30/01/2012). The General Secretary of the union agrees that resources are an on-going struggle which the union is working on. At the present moment the union is working on having a gender co-ordinator in every region which is not easy considering that it will not be a full-time position as mentioned earlier.

One clearly sees that there are many different views on this topic. I believe that it is important to highlight that resources are limited in a union, but the main focus of the union can be determined by examining which department is given more attention and resources, as compared to another. Ms Nyman commented that "the education department is given a lot more money and human resource as compared to my department and this is disconcerting as it makes me feel that the issues I am discussing are not as important as education within the union" (Nyman, P. Interview 4/04/2012). For those who are members of the union, resources are available and ready for them to use. SACCAWU has made a concerted effort in ensuring those in leadership roles within the union do have enough resources in order to do their jobs and by having a budget for the year and allocating money accordingly. This is understandable as the union does serve its members and so it must have the resources available for its members when they need them, particularly during strikes and campaigns.

At the same time the focus on serving its members first has had a negative consequence on the workers of the union as they do not have the adequate resources to do their jobs. An example was given by a woman organizer from Mpumalanga where money was set aside for the '16 Days of Activism' campaign but it was not given to the organizer instead it went to the education sector. The organizer now gets nervous when asking for money for gender as it never comes out even though money has been allocated for the workshops or campaigns.

This example highlights how more attention is given to other departments of the union instead of gender and even though money is set aside for gender activities, union workers use their own prerogative in distribution of money. This example again highlights how changing consciousness needs to occur in all spheres of the union even when it comes to allocation of money.

When I was a part of the Decisions for Life Campaign, Ms Nyman had secured the meeting room for the workshop. This campaign is targeted at young women and it strives for young women to fight for decent work conditions, a healthy work/life balance and to develop their own leadership skills (SACCAWU(e), 2011). During the workshop the finance sector disturbed the workshop and asked Ms Nyman to move her workshop to another meeting room even though she booked the space a week prior. For Ms Nyman she was upset as "they (finance department) feel as if they can come and just move us because it is an issue on gender and not finance. This is not fair" (Nyman, P Interview 15/07/2011). This highlights how subconsciously gender workshops are not seen as a priority by some members of the union by behaviours they exhibit. It then becomes critical for gender mainstreaming to occur within the union whereby moving gender workshops to different locations which facilitators are not comfortable with does not occur and that any activities involving gender are given the same respect as any other activity within the union.

Organizing women in a separate space has its challenges in terms of resources. Without the proper financial and human resources, trying to deal with gender inequality is proving to be a challenge particularly when members and sectors of the union do not recognize and take seriously the issues affecting women. This does not necessarily mean that having women in a separate space in terms of resources has been unsuccessful, but rather more attention in terms of monitoring of finance and raising consciousness needs to be stressed upon members.

Conclusion

Gender inequality still persists in our society. From the beliefs and ideas of what a nuclear family should look like and the subordinate role that a woman plays in this structure, to the workplace where women are paid and treated unequally, women still experience some sort of oppression in most spheres of society. One of the main reasons for the continuation of this oppression is patriarchy. Patriarchy has become so entrenched in our society that it affects attitudes, behaviours and actions from individuals to organizations. The casualization of work has been difficult for unions to organize workers, particularly women who tend to be casual workers who are the most exploited. The masculine nature of unions so far, have not fully allowed for women's issues to be recognized and discussed like other issues in the union. Instead, gender inequality is seen as an adhoc issue and is not given the full attention that it requires. Within SACCAWU, having a unique separatist model in trying to deal with gender inequality has proven to be successful; however, this success has been accompanied with difficulties along the way.

Organizing in a separate space

The union over the years recognized that women had to be capacitated with skills and education in order to challenge gender inequality within the union and the workplace. It is clear from the research that one of the main factors for organizing women in a separate space is so that they can express themselves and not feel intimidated by their male colleagues. From the women interviewed who have been a part of SACCAWU's programmes and the workshops conducted over the years, all agree that the creation of separate spaces for women, accompanied by carefully designed education and training programmes, and the commitment and understanding that men also have to be part of the changes, has been successful. For these women, the separate space allows them to have discussions on issues which the union at times may overlook and not give enough attention to. The separate space also allows for women to relate to one another and this creates a bond amongst women. Men who were interviewed in this research also agree that having the workshops and gender programmes targeted at women is successful as it gives them the skills and education which they (women) might lack. Women who were interviewed commented that the gender programmes not only

capacitate them with skills in the workplace, but they use these skills in other spheres of their lives. This can be seen as a success of the policy as it wants to challenge gender inequality not only in the workplace but in broader society by equipping women with the necessary skills and education.

(i) Gender Empowerment Programme

This programme was important as it was the first gender programme where women were targeted specifically in order to deal with gender inequality. The success of this programme as mentioned in the previous chapter can be seen by the growth of leadership of women over the years. Secondly participants of the programme have said it was a successful programme for them as they gained confidence in themselves and their work abilities and they used these skills in other spheres of their lives. The success of the programme has influenced the organizing of women in a separate space. There were of course men in the group, but the emphasis was mainly on capacitating women in the union. This is important to note because the union is advocating for having women in a separate space, not excluding men in the programmes and workshops, but having the main focus on issues affecting women and targeting women. An argument can be made that the percentage of leadership of women is small over 15 years in specific positions of power, but what this research has taught me is that change will not occur immediately, it takes time. When discussing gender inequality, one has to be aware of the fact that you are dealing with the institution of patriarchy. Patriarchy is an entrenched belief in our society that is supported by many other institutions in our society such as religion and the family. In order to overcome this issue it requires changing all these different institutions which have a huge influence on individuals.

(ii) Importance of Gender Workshops

Gender workshops are important within the union as they raise awareness of the gender oppression that women face. This is important as it allows both women and the union to challenge the oppression. Another reason for saying this is because these programmes not only allow for a space for women to discuss their issues, but it also empowers them significantly. The workshops and programmes give the women skills and resources which they use not only in the workplace, but also outside of the workplace in their communities. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a respondent commented that the skills she gained from the Gender Empowerment Programme (GEP) she used in her church. The workshops are also important as they educate both men and women on issues which they are facing in the workplace and at home. This is important as it starts to raise consciousness and this challenges the patriarchal society which we live in.

(iii) Women's Leadership

The number of women in leadership positions at various levels of the union has increased. Since 1998 the number of women as local office bearers has increased from 37% to 46%. 33% of women are currently national office bearers and the majority of shopstewards are women. This may seem small because of the ratio of women in the union as compared to men, but one must understand that patriarchal beliefs and attitudes still persist within South African society, which challenge the role of a woman in leadership. Women occupying equal roles of leadership within the union will take time, but the union is trying to balance the inequality.

The approach prioritising separate spaces for women has, however, also faced challenges:

(iv) Masculine Space

As mentioned in the previous chapter unions tend to be masculine in nature. This means that issues that affect women will not always come to the forefront as much as they should, even though the union is made up of over 70% of women. The masculine space has an effect on people's behaviour and language, particularly when it comes to dealing with gender inequality. An example was made in the findings and analysis chapter where a gender

workshop was moved to another room, even though the gender co-ordinator had booked the room in advance, but still the workshop was forced to move for the education meeting. This highlights the issue that dealing with gender inequality is a day to day activity and requires a changing of behaviour and consciousness. This can prove to be a challenge when women are organizing in a masculine space and are trying to deal with gender inequality in the union, workplace and broader society.

(v) Gender as an adhoc issue

The union has recognized that gender inequality is an issue, but it needs to make even more of a commitment to dealing with the issue. The policy on gender says one thing but the practice is another. Issues of human resources and not having full time gender co-ordinators indicate that more commitment needs to be given to the gender department. The behaviour of union members and how they interact with the gender department indicate that practice needs to change so that consciousness on this issue is created and maintained. This will be a challenge because, as mentioned before, patriarchy has affected not only beliefs of individuals, but also behaviour and changing this will not occur immediately and will take time.

(vi) Self-belief

The biggest problem I found in my research in looking at gender inequality in the union is that many of the women do not believe in themselves. A majority of the women in the union do not seem to believe that they should occupy positions of power and that they should not challenge the status quo of patriarchy. Patriarchy has influenced how women view themselves in relation to men particularly in positions of leadership, where women feel they should not challenge a man in leadership positions. This idea is changing, but it will take some time before it becomes the view of the majority. This is perhaps because the women members of the union may begin to challenge power in the union or the workplace, but they also live in broader society in which patriarchal beliefs are deeply rooted, and therefore hard to challenge.

Organizing women in a separate space is a success as it firstly capacitates women with the skills and knowledge which they do not have. Secondly it allows women to have a space within a masculine organization to express themselves and not feel scared. This space allows women to believe in themselves and challenge positions of leadership. Lastly the separate space allows women to challenge the status quo of what the role of a woman should be within SACCAWU and also in other spheres of society. This is important as it begins the second part of the gender policy which is gender mainstreaming. By capacitating women with education, they have begun to raise consciousness amongst their fellow male colleagues which is important as challenging gender inequality should not only be left to women but it must include men. SACCAWU continues to challenge gender inequality by having this unique model.

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Appendix

Profile of Interviewees

Edcon Male shopsteward, Interview on 15/02/2012 at Beford Centre, Bedfordview

Edcon Female member, Interview on 15/02/2012 at Bedford Centre, Bedfordview

Makro female shopsteward, Interview 25/11/2011 at Maponya Mall, Soweto

Pick ‘n Pay female member, Interview on 27/03/2012 at Bedford Centre, Bedfordview

Union female member, Interview on 21/10/2011 at Maponya Mall, Soweto

Woman Organizer, Interview 25/11/2011 at Maponya Mall, Soweto

Woman Organizer, Interview on 8/11/2011 at Germiston Mall, Germiston

Woman Organizer, Part GEP , Interview 26/03/2012 at Benoni Lakes Hotel, Benoni

Woman Organizer, Part of GEP, Interview 26/03/2012 at at Benoni Lakes Hotel, Benoni

Pick n Pay Male Member, Interview 13/03/2012 at Bedford Centre, Bedfordview

Edcon Female Shopsteward, Interview on 14/10/2011 at Edcon Offices, Selby

Woman Organizer, Interview 26/03/2012 at at Benoni Lakes Hotel, Benoni

Pick ‘n Pay Male Shopsteward, Interview 22/03/2012 at Bedford Centre, Bedfordview

M. Mbongwe, Deputy Secretary General, Interview 30/01/2012 at SACCAWU National Offices

P. Nyman, National Gender Co-ordinator, Interview 15/07/2011 and 4/4/2012 at at SACCAWU National Offices

B. Skulu, General Secretary, Interview on 28/03/2012 at SACCAWU National Offices

A.Phehle, Deputy President, Interview on 4/4/2012 at SACCAWU National Offices

Male shopsteward, Interview 20/10/2012 at SACCAWU National Offices