

‘What do we know about the impact of precarious academic labour on contract faculty and on our university communities?’

The Australian perspective

Robyn May

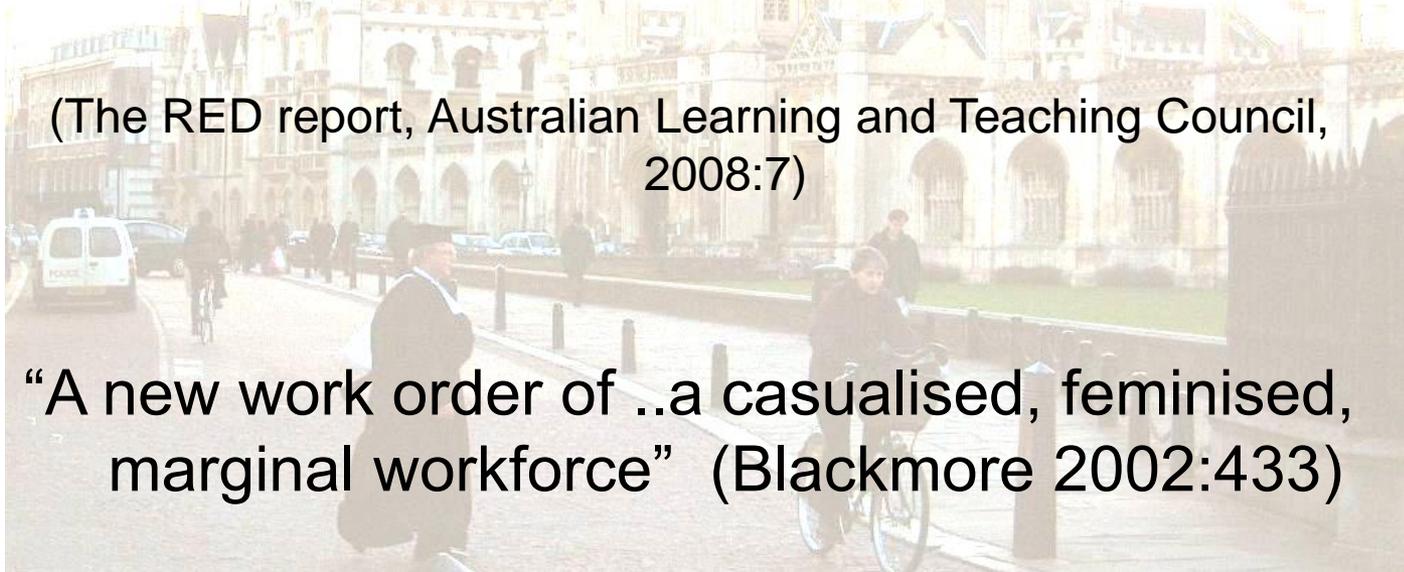
Griffith University, Australia

The 'diversifying' academic profession

“The full-time, permanent, centrally-located teaching/ research academic is no longer the norm around which policy and practice can be formed.”

(The RED report, Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 2008:7)

“A new work order of ..a casualised, feminised, marginal workforce” (Blackmore 2002:433)



Dr Bonny Cassidy, Letter to the editor, The Age, 29 July 2013,

'Since completing my doctorate five years ago I have worked as a casual teaching academic in [two states] combining casual contracts from several institutions as I have been unable to find a permanent position anywhere. In that time I have received a maximum of two hours of pedagogical 'training'. Most university teaching skills are learnt on the job or through fleeting incidental conversations with colleagues. Although doing the frontline work of the university, we [casual academics] move around campuses almost invisibly without offices or invitations to collegial meetings....'

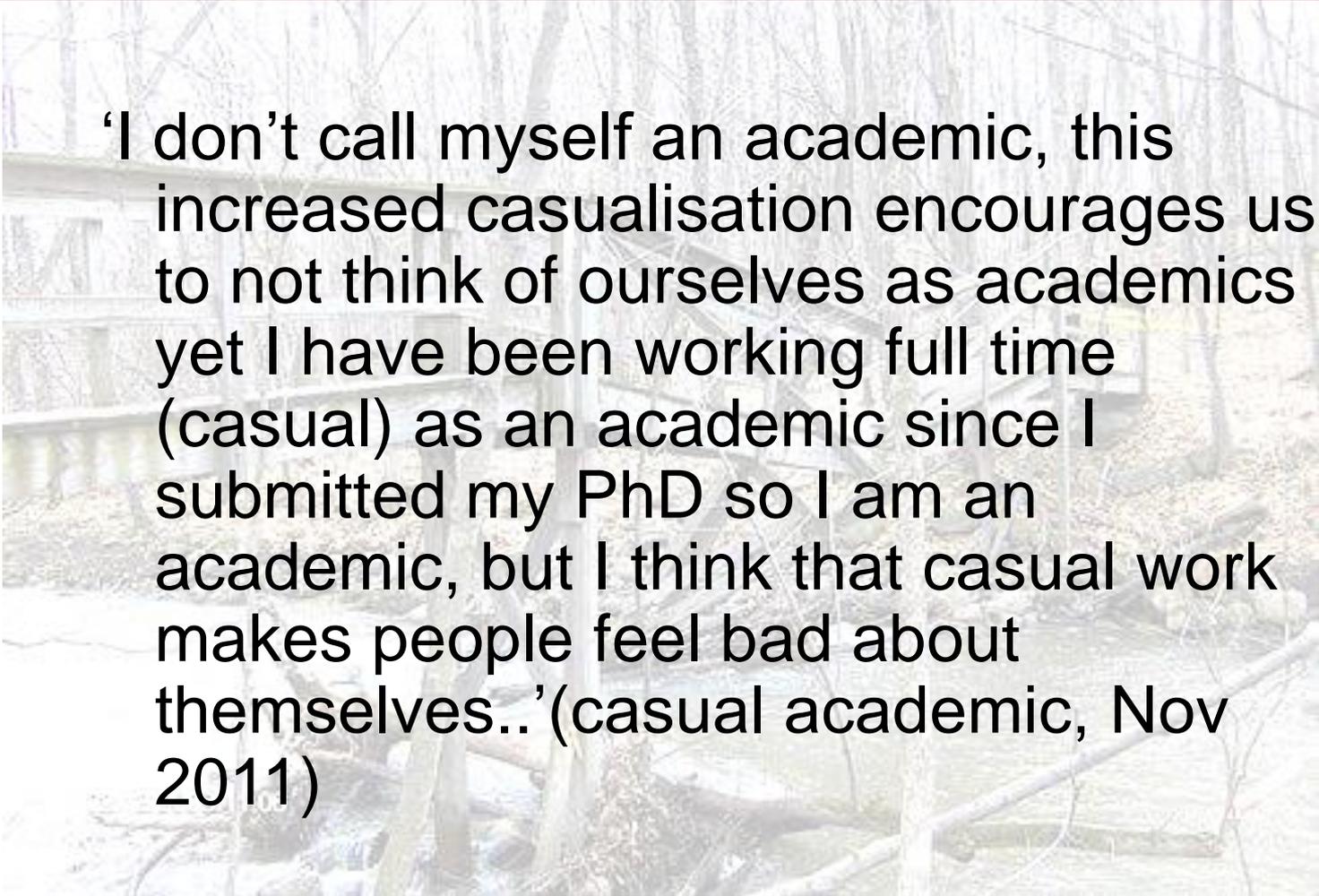
How did we get here?

- Elite to universal HE provision
- Decline in government funding
- Devolved budget models within universities
- The rise and rise of managerialism
- ‘Disassembling’ of academic work

Impact of casualisation

- Invisibility
- Transfer of risk
- Gendered precariousness
- Academics as ‘accidental managers’

It's a curious way to run a university that the teaching – the core business – is done by the most marginalised members of the community, and this impacts on both the casuals and the ongoing staff (University manager).



‘I don’t call myself an academic, this increased casualisation encourages us to not think of ourselves as academics yet I have been working full time (casual) as an academic since I submitted my PhD so I am an academic, but I think that casual work makes people feel bad about themselves..’(casual academic, Nov 2011)

And the personal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ullwif-cNsl>