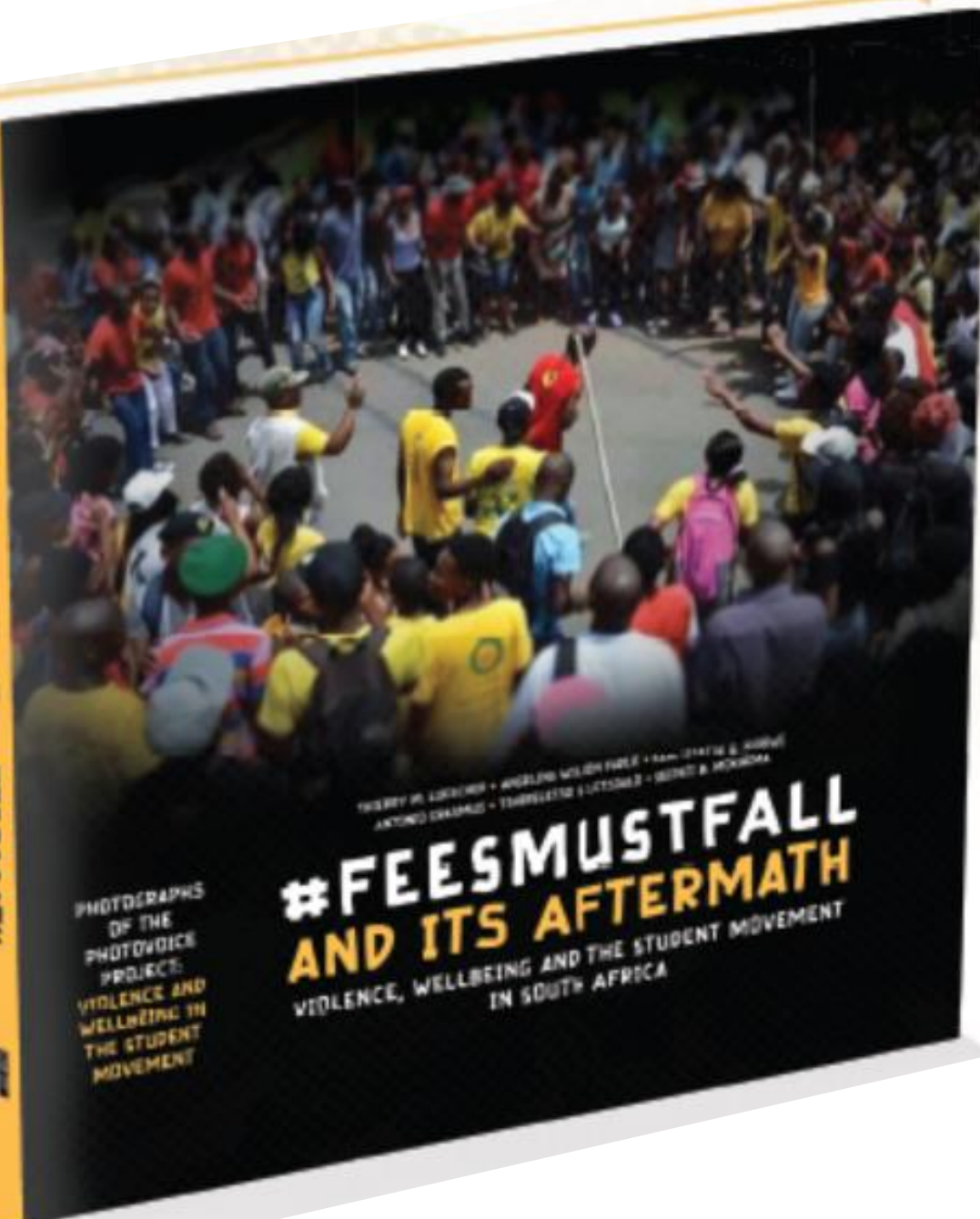


#FEESMUSTFALL AND ITS AFTERMATH



THEORY IN EDUCATION • ANSELMO SILEIRA FARIAS • RANU SHAFIQ • JORGE
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#FEESMUSTFALL AND ITS AFTERMATH

VIOLENCE, WELLBEING AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT
IN SOUTH AFRICA

PHOTOGRAPHS
OF THE
PHOTOVOICE
PROJECT:
VIOLENCE AND
WELLBEING IN
THE STUDENT
MOVEMENT





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CHAPTER 1

STUDENT WELLBEING, TO US

“

*We hope to contribute to flourishing:
flourishing students and young people, a flourishing society, and a
flourishing Africa.*

”

TOWARDS FLOURISHING

To bridge the gap between rich and poor, white and black, male and female, historically advantaged and disadvantaged; to be able to climb the social and economic ladder, have social mobility and realise economic emancipation, education in general, and higher education more especially, provide a determining mechanism (Soudien, 2021). Yet, despite huge efforts, the stakes remain enormously, often unbearably high for black students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds to access, progress through, and succeed in South Africa's universities. They often come to university

not only carrying their own hopes and aspirations for a prosperous future, but also bearing the expectation of generations (Swartz et al., 2018). Then to find themselves in contexts where so many odds seem to be stacked against them academically and economically, and too frequently also culturally, socially, and politically, and where therefore dreams and aspirations seem to evaporate within quarters and semesters, the choice is limited: struggle or resign.

Mlungisi Cele showed in his remarkable study of student activism at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) that students' struggles take on different types of action. He distinguishes between individual, survivalist strategies



WHITE STAND _VIOLENT SYMBOLISM

Kamohelo Maphike, UFS

This picture is a symbolic sight of uninterrupted white hegemony, racism, and an extreme attitude of symbolic anti-blackness. The opening sentence is justified by understanding Maphike (2018:5), [who says] that symbols in any society are attached to values, representation, art, and a celebration of history. The symbol presented in this picture presents a false sense of white purity and a superiority mentality encompassed by both white students and white members of staff. According to Maphike (2018: 5), such symbols are viewed as 'territorial symbols'. Territorial symbols are normally built to mark a territory of a particular group, celebrating victory over a dominated group etc. The statute of Steyn is a reminder that RACIST AFRIKANER NATIONAL ISM reigns supreme in this university. Moreover, it articulates an artistic meaning that this space was not meant for people of colour. A violent articulation.

CHAPTER 4

OPPRESSIVE SPACES

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Student activists focus attention on the continued glorification of the oppressor, colonialism, and apartheid on university campuses. They illustrate and name everyday encounters with racism and patriarchy as they manifest in university campus spaces.

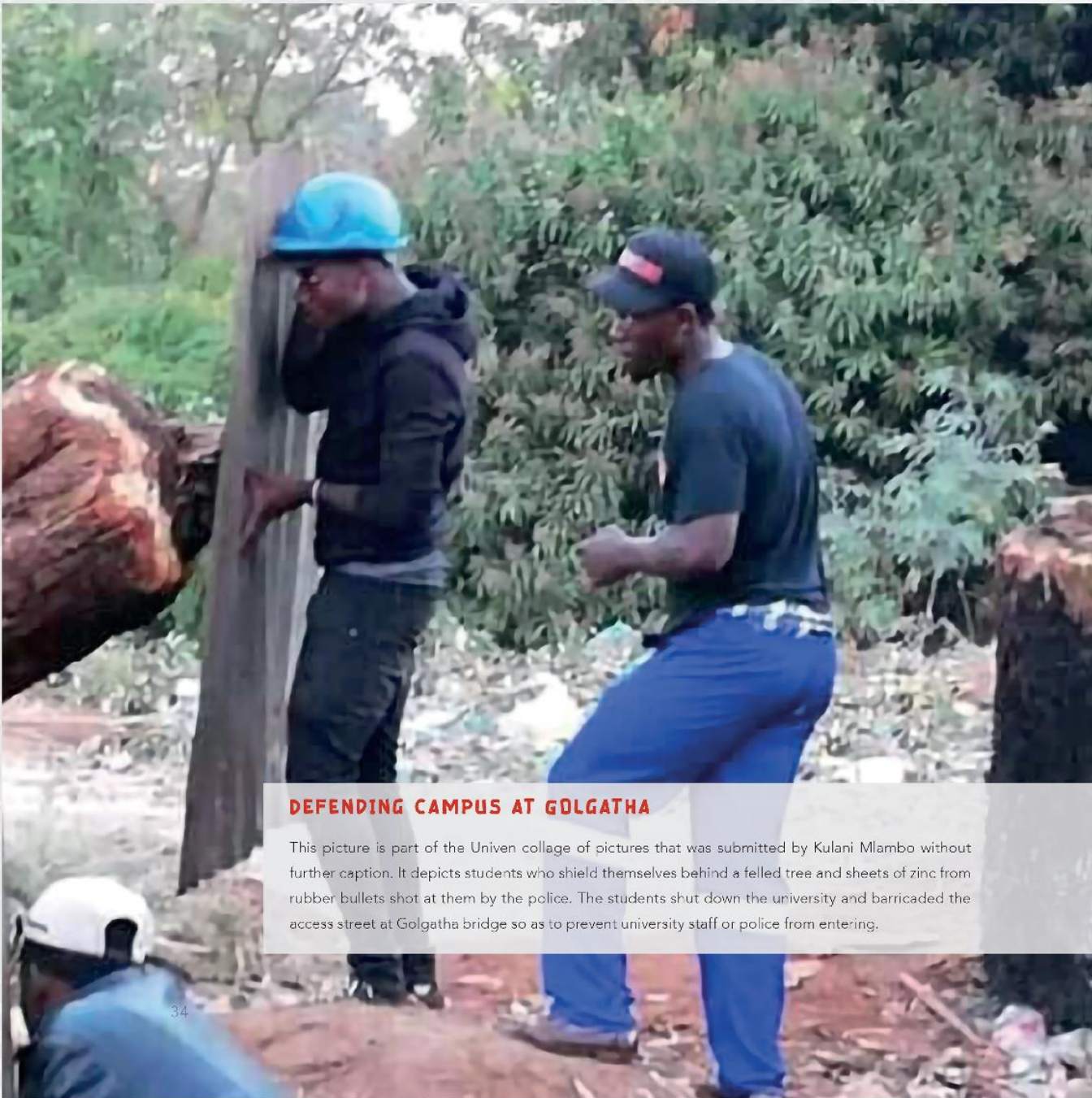
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The meaning and significance of space in the transformation of higher education has been highlighted in the work of Philippa Tumubweinee with her research on the campus of UFS. At the same time, the student movement starting with #RhodesMustFall at UCT ever so articulately pointed to the need to decolonise campus space, living and learning, and culture and knowledge in South African universities. They did so inspired by overseas student movements linked to #BlackLivesMatter and #BlackOnCampus as well as campaigns like Oxford University's #RhodesMustFall and Harvard Law Schools' #RoyallMustFall.

“Space is not the void between brick and mortar; neither is it an abstract thing that is independent of the substantial social relations within it. Rather, (social) space, in the original of Lefebvre and others building on him, is a (social) product, which co-produces the social nature of institutions such as

universities. This reading of space as social also involves the political, because social space is where 'the struggles and contradictions of 'living actuality' (Kipfer, 2009: xxi) happen'. Against this reading of space, the reality of everyday student life on campus, [...] is therefore a co-construct between human actors and the space within which they act and relate.” (Tumubweinee & Luescher, 2019, p. 2).

With photos and narratives that have been grouped under the theme “Oppressive spaces”, student activists focus attention on the continued glorification of the oppressor, colonialism, and apartheid on university campuses. They illustrate and name everyday encounters with racism and patriarchy as they manifest in university campus spaces. Thus, the student activists illustrate students' experiences which they are not able to ignore and willing to give into, which is part of the motive for students to join the student movement.



DEFENDING CAMPUS AT GOLGATHA

This picture is part of the Univen collage of pictures that was submitted by Kulani Mlambo without further caption. It depicts students who shield themselves behind a felled tree and sheets of zinc from rubber bullets shot at them by the police. The students shut down the university and barricaded the access street at Golgatha bridge so as to prevent university staff or police from entering.

CHAPTER 5

THE VIOLENCE OF INSTITUTIONS

In his essay "Lenin and Philosophy", French sociologist Louis Althusser conceptualised two types of state institutions. Ideological state apparatuses (ISA) such as educational and religious institutions, he argued, operated by methods of ideology. Repressive state apparatuses (RSA) such as the courts, police, and prisons, used physical violence to achieve the goal of domination (Althusser, 1970). As ideological state apparatuses, universities operate by a diversity of practices and rituals, which produce particular responses by humans, and these roles or subject positions that humans take on are the lived experience of ideology. On the whole, the task of ISA is to ultimately reproduce the ruling ideology, which is always an ideology of domination, so as to provide a 'glue' for, or cement the totality of social relations (Althusser, 1970, pp. 141-144; Giddens, 1977, p. 179).

The theme "The violence of institutions" captures a rupture in the functioning of South Africa's public universities as ISA. Universities operations, which are experienced as violent, produce an emancipatory and frequently violent response by students, and in turn, prompt the universities (with court interdicts and private security) and the state to

mobilise RSA to counteract the student protests. The cycle of violence and repression that this produces is well studied and known to create a culture of violence in student activism (Nkomo, 1984; Altbach, 1991; Luescher, 2018; Morwe, 2021). What this theme chiefly presents is pictures that show how the same institutions that are entrusted by the people to emancipate and empower young people can end up in a contradictory position where they become the antithesis of their own *raison d'être* by shutting off engagement and repressing critical dissent. If, as Madonsela (2021) suggests in the quote presented in chapter 1, there were adult men and women leading the institutions of the state, leaders who can sit down, listen, and get transformation done, there was no need for stun grenades and rubber bullets on university campuses.

“

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CHAPTER 7

PROTEST AND VIOLENCE

This theme shows the extent to which the student protests were engulfed by the spell of violence, exerted by students, police, and security services. Numerous pictures that were volunteered by the student activists depict moments of protest action. Some show the painful consequences of physical violence such as the pictures of students' gashing bullet wounds. When talking about the pictures, students often reflected on the unnecessary violence that would take place at protests. Frequently, the activists would argue that violence was initiated by police and security personnel and forced students to retaliate. Many of the case studies in Malose Langa's (2017) analysis of #FeesMustFall concur with this view. The theme also touches on the dynamics that existed between the larger

student body that did not want to partake in the movement and student activists. At times, students would be coerced to attend mass meetings organised by student activists and cajoled into participating in marches. Overall, what is missing in the depictions of protesting is the novel online dimension that made the #FeesMustFall protests unique in democratic South Africa. The use of social media, chiefly Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp groups, enabled speedy and cross-campus communication and mobilisation. It also provided a mechanism for getting the students' message into the public media, mobilising public support, and thus pressing students' onto the political agenda (Satgar in Booysen, 2016; Bosch et al., 2020; Luescher et al., 2021a).

DEFENCE MECHANISM

Kulani Mlambo, Univen

This was our source of strength. We did not have guns; we had to protect our self with stones; this was our shield, our protection; this was a constant reminder that a black student has to fight to break the shackles of academic chains; as we threw each and every stone; we saw ourselves getting closer to our freedom; when the police ran away from the stones, it was a sign that we are making a valid statement to everyone. However, it was painful to see ourselves fighting

for academic freedom while other students from the A-class were receiving everything on a silver platter; they have never fought for anything; they had never had a reason to protest as if the country belonged to them. As for the black student, everything had to be war, fights, and violence. We never lost hope, because we knew that we were fighting a just cause; we were ready for anything, because we wanted to save a black child's future; we didn't have proper fighting materials; we only had stones - stones inside a trolley.



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CHAPTER 10

GENDER INSIDE THE MOVEMENT

Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso reminds us that no revolution can succeed without the emancipation of women.

“The revolution and women’s liberation go together. We do not talk of women’s emancipation as an act of charity or out of a surge of human compassion. It is a basic necessity for the revolution to triumph.” (Sankara, 2007 [1987]).

This theme looks into the reality of gender dynamics within the student movement. By means of several photos, participants critically reflect on how women are treated in the movement, in its leadership, on the front lines, and in the background. The theme speaks to moments that clearly depict the nature of gender dynamics within the movement and also how students acted upon issues that erupted as a result of these dynamics.



THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF THE WOMXN’S VOICE

Siyasanga Ndwayi, UWC

This was after a plenary in 2016 in the UWC Student Centre. We took the picture after a long discussion with the masses. My late friend and comrade, Mlunguza Luxolo, who usually took pictures of us, wanted to join in and be in the picture. It’s one of the few pictures we took with him. The rest were taken by him. I’m in the picture wearing a black cap. The picture also represents how our space was male-dominated with few women figures.



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CHAPTER 12

OUTCOMES OF PROTESTS

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Every action has its outcomes; some are positive and some negative, but ultimately the aim is to acknowledge the outcome of one's actions and to use this as a guide moving forward.

”

With this theme, some students take a brief look into some of the outcomes of the student protests. Every action has its outcomes; some are positive and some negative, but ultimately the aim is to acknowledge the outcome of one's actions and to use this as a guide moving forward. Student protests also have their intended outcomes. Some of what was achieved was positive and radically changed things in higher education and the institutions. For example, in the aftermath of #FeesMustFall, many more students (who were previously called the missing middle) gained access to student funding provided by NSFAS; the fee structure in several institutions was changed, for instance, by reducing or abolishing the minimum initial payment and being more flexible in handling students' historic debt; some departments and faculties embarked on processes to decolonise the curriculum, especially in the Humanities; and some institutions decided to insource previously outsourced support service workers on the back of the #EndOutsourcing campaigns. Gender-based violence and rape culture suddenly became household terms,

and most institutions started developing or revising their sexual harassment policies. Sexual orientation and the acceptance and accommodation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersexed, queer, and other sexual minority students (LGBTQ+) on university campuses became topical. For a while, it felt like these developments and policy concessions heralded a change in the institutional cultures of universities and the culture of governance, and ushered in a new responsiveness by university leaders and government to student concerns and grievances. Yet, the "peacetime" turned out short-lived. And the new culture of governance, where university leaders and party elders would humble themselves to sit with students and workers to engage on level ground, proved imaginary. Meanwhile, the costs for many students had been very high, as they had been for many workers, academics, university managers, and members of the police and security services who had become party to a circus of violence. In the worst cases, there were students who had paid the ultimate price when protesting for social justice.



CHAPTER 14

UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

The emphasis on unity and solidarity in the student movement, we suggest, is related to the salient role of relationships, interconnectedness, and interdependency that characterises African cultures (Metz, 2017; Wissing et al., 2020). In Wissing et al. (2020), it is argued that although importance is placed on intrapsychic processes, interpersonal interactions contribute to how individuals make sense of their experiences and overall wellbeing. It is these interactions in the context of the student movement that we categorise as unity and solidarity.

The photos presented in this theme highlight the nature of close-knit relationships that held student activists together at all times. It is the sense of connectedness and shared purpose that fostered commitment and care for one another during and in the aftermath of the student

movement activities. Demonstration of solidarity was evident in the way protest actions were organised and in the mass meetings that students used to deliberate and strategise.

In addition, there was a clear process of collective decision making that guided the manner and form in which students made their grievances known to university authorities. Collective decision-making provided a stronger voice, forged a sense of unity, and even offered protection for each student. Although there were tensions and divisions that existed between different student groups, there were nevertheless many moments of solidarity between men and women, political organisations, and workers and students as depicted in the pictures from this theme.

STUDENT AND WORKER RELATIONS AT UWC

Azania Simthandile Tyhali, UWC

This picture was taken in 2016. We had an exhibition with the workers. The banner says “Black Pain. Free Our Parents. End Outsourcing” which summarises the experience of our parents at the university. It is a representation of the #EndOutsourcing protests that led to 143 security workers being fired. It further invokes an anxiety and anger in us that understand the plight of the workers.



CHAPTER 15

WELLBEING

“
Black students found solace and relatability with each other through their pain, struggles and collective trauma.
”

Broadly categorised, psychological wellbeing is studied as indicators of hedonic wellbeing which includes feelings of happiness, pleasure, cheerfulness, and enjoyment, and the absence of discomfort (Diener et al., 2013), and eudaimonic wellbeing which refers to human activity that reflects virtue, excellence, the best within people, and the full development of their potentials (Huta & Waterman 2014; Joshanloo, 2016; Waterman, 2013). In addition, psychological wellbeing research seeks to explore resources, strengths and experiences that promote

positive states in different contexts (Seligman, 2011, p. 28). The photos and narratives portraying this theme comprise of descriptions that indicate psychological functioning and resources for fostering wellbeing during and in the aftermath of student movement-related violence. Some resources that came to the fore include sports, family, and self-education, and finding physical and psychological safe spaces. There were also instances where negative coping mechanisms were mentioned including substance abuse.

UBUHLE BENDODA (THE BEAUTY OF A MAN)

Siphephelo (Shange) Mthembu, DUT

As the first son in my family, I have to make sure that the cows are well taken care of because they are passed from generation to generation. After I was suspended, I would

take the cattle to the field to make sure they were well-fed, and it became a coping mechanism. I would not overthink what had transpired at school and my suspension while I was herding the cattle. It is something that I had not done since I was young, so it was very refreshing to do and it was also a very useful distraction mechanism.



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CHAPTER 18

CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

“

When asked about their experiences of violence, what is it that the students describe? And what does that mean for understanding violence in the context of the student movement?

How do experiences of pain and joy, sadness and happiness, hardship and friendship, all conjoin in students' wellbeing dance of the negatives and positives of life?

”

#FEESMUSTFALL_FOREVER

The goals of the project “Violence and Wellbeing in the Context of the 2015/16 Student Movement” were to expose the unacceptably high levels of violence on university campuses and the impact this has on student wellbeing, and to advocate for more responsive higher education policy and leadership. These goals, along with others (see chapter 2), were established, elaborated, and refined in successive Photovoice workshops and World Cafés, along with the modalities by which to achieve them. Have they

been achieved? As it turns out, over half a decade since the first #FeesMustFall campaign, the student voice must still be amplified by protests and violence of the most dreadful kind.

“Mthokozisi Ntumba was an innocent bystander and, indeed, even the students, much as they were protesting, the way I saw it on television, did not warrant the type of resistance and push from the police [sic],” said President Cyril Ramaphosa, as quoted in the Sunday Independent of 14 March 2021.



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FOREWORD

TRANSFORMATION AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT: THEN, NOW, AND IN FUTURE - BY SALEEM BADAT

Observing the South African student protests from my then location at The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York, I successfully motivated in 2015 a grant to the Human Sciences Research Council for research and writing on the protests. Based on my past work on black higher education student politics under apartheid and my intimate decades-long involvement in higher education, my interest was in research that deciphered the meanings and explained the student protests of 2015-16, including the continuities and discontinuities with past protests and especially what was distinctive about the contemporary protests. I noted that in 2015-16, there was a re-entry in very visible ways of South African university students onto the higher education terrain. This was not to say that students were not part of steering and shaping higher education through institutional governance structures or that there were no student protests between 1994 and 2015. There were, especially at the historically black universities and at those institutions that were merged as part of the restructuring of the higher education landscape after 2000.

However, it was being suggested that there was something especially dramatic and distinctive about the 2015-16 protests, and I was curious wherein lay the drama and distinctiveness of the protests. Did they have to do

with the breadth and depth of mobilisation, the targets of opposition and the nature of the demands? Or was it that they possibly served as a salutary reminder of the tardy pace and limited degree of transformation in higher education? And, given the connections between higher education and society, did they signal also impatience with change and the limits of change in the wider economic, political, and social domains? How should the 2015-16 protests be theorised and their character and significance for universities, higher education, and the wider polity and society be understood? Were the 2015-16 protests, I wondered, one manifestation of the 'organic crisis' of South African higher education, a crisis that necessitated urgent and major "formative action" on the part of the state and other key actors? The reality was that state funding was grossly inadequate to support universities to undertake their critical purposes – produce knowledge, cultivate high quality graduates, engage meaningfully with diverse communities – to ensure that learning and teaching, research, and institutional culture were transformed and to help to realise environmentally sustainable economic development, equity, social justice, and the extension and deepening of democracy.



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AFTERWORD

THE MORE HUMAN FACE OF VIOLENCES
BY SHARLENE SWARTZ

There are multiple forms of violence – violences, in fact. Johan Galtung (1990), the Norwegian theorist and father of peace studies, describes three broad forms of violence, namely direct, structural, and cultural violence. Direct violence refers to direct action between actors, individually or collectively, such as killing, maiming, and physical, sexual or emotional assault. *#FeesMustFall and its Aftermath: Violence, Wellbeing and the Student Movement in South Africa* reports on much of this form of violence: the high levels of physical violence on university campuses, whether this violence is committed by students themselves or by state and private security agents.

Structural violence represents the systematic ways in which some groups are hindered from having equal access to opportunities and basic human needs, when these are maintained through laws and policies; for example, apartheid legislation in South Africa, excluding girl-children from education, or limiting health care access for those without insurance. *#FeesMustFall and its Aftermath* shows how uncaring and unresponsive university leaders and policy makers who ignore student grievances and experiences contribute to structural violence. Clearly, “a

violent structure leaves marks not only on the human body but also on the mind and the spirit” (Galtung, 1990, p. 294). Structural violence, as Paul Farmer (1996, p. 261) explains, can also be “the pain born of deep poverty or of racism”.

Galtung’s third type of violence, cultural violence, encompasses the prevailing social norms that make direct and structural violence easy to accomplish, especially when based on patriarchy, racism, or wealth. Here Pierre Bourdieu’s, view of symbolic violence complements Galtung’s cultural violence. Symbolic violence is exerted intentionally, but invisibly, to dominate others and acts to maintain social hierarchies so that exploitation at structural and direct levels is possible. For Bourdieu, symbolic violence is kept in place through:

“intimidation...the modalities of practices, the ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking...which, instead of telling the...[person] what he must do, tells him what he is, and thus leads him to become durably what he has to be, is the condition for the effectiveness of all kinds of symbolic power” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 52).



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With photographs of the photovoice project
"Violence and Wellbeing in the Student Movement"

#FEESMUSTFALL AND ITS AFTERMATH

VIOLENCE, WELLBEING AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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