

**State and Civil Society: #FeesMustFall Movement as a Counter-  
Hegemonic Force? A Case of the University of the Western Cape  
Experience**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

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2019

## DECLARATION

I declare that this mini thesis has been developed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where expressly stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

Location: University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Signature: .....



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the various support structures I have in my life, and here I wish to acknowledge them. Firstly, I honour uQamata for guidance and strength throughout my academic career.

Secondly, I appreciate my family, my Mother (Yandiswa Mpushe) and late Grandmother (Nomsa “Sasa” Mpushe), in particular for the constant belief and support throughout my education. I would also like to acknowledge my partner, Zamantungwa Khumalo, for the love, patience, support and belief she has shown me. I love you, and this would not be possible without you.

Also, I would like to acknowledge my academic supervisor, Dr. Anciano, I honestly could not ask for a better supervisor; rigorous, honest and forever interested in my development, thank you Doc. I would like to acknowledge my friends, whose passion for education is unwavering and kept me invigorated throughout this study – We Are Indeed the Future. To the ‘reading group’ – Conrad and Mr. H, thank you for the commitment to development and never getting tired of asking WHY.

Finally, to my one year old daughter, KwafikaOkuhle, I say to you – my life – this all makes sense because of you. Thank you for a renewed energy of love, tenacity and courage in my life – it kept me going even when I did not feel like it any longer.

## KEYWORDS

FEES MUST FALL

HIGHER EDUCATION

DECOLONIZATION

HEGEMONY

COUNTER HEGEMONY

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

FREE EDUCATION

CONSENT

COERCION



## **ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

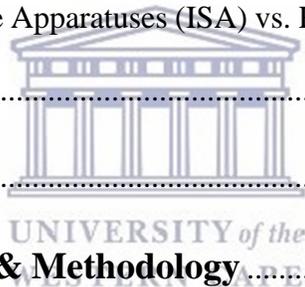
<b>ANC</b>	<b>African National Congress</b>
<b>#FMF</b>	<b>#FeesMustFall</b>
<b>EFF</b>	<b>Economic Freedom Fighters</b>
<b>NSFAS</b>	<b>National Student Financial Aid Scheme</b>
<b>UWC</b>	<b>University of the Western Cape</b>
<b>CPUT</b>	<b>Cape Peninsula University of Technology</b>
<b>SRC</b>	<b>Students' Representative Council</b>
<b>SCM</b>	<b>Student Credit Management</b>
<b>DA</b>	<b>Democratic Alliance</b>
<b>PASMA</b>	<b>Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania</b>
<b>SASCO</b>	<b>South African Students Congress</b>
<b>EFFsc</b>	<b>Economic Freedom Fighters Student Command</b>
<b>DASO</b>	<b>Democratic Alliance Student Organization</b>
<b>#RMF</b>	<b>#RhodesMustFall</b>



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## Abstract

The #FeesMustFall (#FMF) movement is an important moment in South Africa as it provides insight into the evolution of the relations between state and civil society. An inquiry into the 2015/2016 student protests at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) shows the contradictions that persist in South African society twenty years after apartheid. The study examines the reaction of the state to the dissent embodied by #FMF demands. Drawing on Gramsci and Althusser the study develops a framework against which #FMF is assessed, in order to test whether the movement was counter-hegemonic, if so, to what extent. The assessment is done using a qualitative approach to the research; i.e. auto-ethnography, which relies on the experiences of the author, as a tool of data collection. The selection of this technique is informed by the proximity of the author to the protests, and scarcity of prior research done on the UWC #FMF case. Also, the study uses primary data such as media statements, media articles, YouTube videos, speeches, interviews and personal communications as a means to triangulate the auto-ethnographic data.



The data gives insight into the origins of the movement at UWC, the motivations of, and the tactics employed by the leaders. The movement at UWC shuts down the campus, blocks national roads, marches to the airport and even disrupts exams in attempts to see its mission through; a mission of Fee Free Education. Finally, drawing on the framework from Gramsci and Althusser this study notes the persistence of contradictions such as access to higher education in democratic South Africa. It shows the battle for hegemony between the state and civil society and identifies the dominance of the state, and how it deals with those who challenge it. To this end, #FMF does embody some counter-hegemonic quality. However, the study also reveals how #FMF carries out its actions in the boundaries of hegemonic institutions such as the constitution and the university. Hence, the extent of #FMF's counter-hegemony went as far as affecting the operations of the

university and not the structure thereof. As such, #FMF, like other radical civil society agents of its kind, is an example of issue based and temporary counter-hegemony. Although significant, it is not necessarily that which would see the complete overthrow of the university, or the state for that matter.



## **CHAPTER 1 – Understanding #FeesMustFall**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The history of South Africa’s road to independence has been the subject of profuse intellectual investigations. In admiration of this unique case, Mattes noted that “perhaps more than any other democratizing country, South Africa generates widely differing assessments of the present state and likely future prospects of its democracy” (Mattes, 2002: 22). Notwithstanding these historical difficulties, it is a nation with a fairly strong liberal democratic constitution. As Mattes nonchalantly puts it, “South Africa’s 1996 Constitution is the darling of both liberals and social democrats around the world, widely seen as a ‘state of the art’ document” (Mattes, 2002: 24). Mattes does not admire the South African case without weighing in on some negative observations of the democratic era. He argues that even though South Africa enjoyed a widespread opposition to apartheid from grassroots community groups, trade unions and large non-governmental organizations, there is currently a citizenry that is not entirely supportive of democratic rule and display low levels of political activity (Mattes, 2002: 23). The ‘differing assessments’ alluded to by Mattes seemingly play out in contemporary South African society – which is plagued by contradictions between the state and civil society. It is upon this backdrop that this chapter will introduce the study by providing a background, detailing the problem, outlining the questions of the research and lay out the structure of the study. As such, the chapter will be organized in two parts: the first being the background which sets the scene of the study, and the second part will delve into the problem, the research questions and the purpose of the inquiry.

The study looks at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) #FeesMustFall (#FMF) chapter in the periods 2015 and 2016 as a case. The study undertakes a qualitative research method to unearth

the necessary data to answer the principal research question – to be expounded on later in the chapter – which *is whether, if at all, or the extent, to which UWC #FMF was counter-hegemonic?*

## 1.2 Background

Increasingly, the idea that the democratic constitutional state has ushered in development for all continues to be challenged in certain corners of South Africa. The sporadic episodes of service delivery protests, which show a reasonable amount of dissatisfaction with the state, can be seen as an example of this challenge. According to Alexander (2010), in the second decade of democracy, South Africa has experienced a large number of local protests, which he argues, amounts to the rebellion of the poor. He goes on to argue that “this has been widespread and intense, reaching insurrectionary proportions in some cases. On the surface, the protests have been about service delivery and against uncaring, self-serving, and corrupt leaders of municipalities.” (Alexander, 2010: 2). I offer an extension of his logic here and state that undergirding this tension has been the difficulty for citizens to experience improved quality of life, amidst certain guarantees in the constitution. Hence, the widespread nature of these protests speak to how some parts of civil society have brought to question the idea that being afforded rights is in itself enough, if local government fails in delivering services. The contestation is on the quality of the rights afforded and whether or not they are accessible.

This is a fairly basic presentation of the evolution of South Africa from an apartheid state to anti-apartheid era and finally to the democratic era. The democratic era, evidently, has a significantly different character than that of apartheid, with the acknowledgement of rights such as: the right to education, healthcare and housing are all in the Constitution (Constitution of South Africa, 1996).

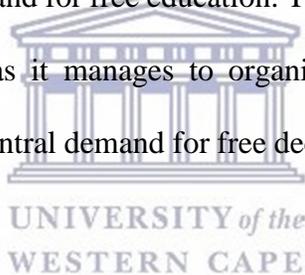
The constitutional democracy of South Africa, in theory, guarantees its citizens a range of fundamental human rights; the right to healthcare, housing, water and sanitation and quality accessible basic and tertiary education, as far as it is possible, are some examples worth mentioning (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

To fortify the background of this study, the international synthesis report on *the role of universities in the transformation of society* is engaged. The report deals with the evolution of the university and its impact throughout various stages of development in society. This analysis looks at the university as four main things, namely: the university as an ideological apparatus – a battle field for various ideas in society; instruments to facilitate social structure and asserting the norms and values of the elite; knowledge production and lastly the training and certification of skilled and semi-skilled labour for the market. (Brennan, King and Lebeau 2004). The report concedes as well, that the university is a function and product of its environment, it suggests “universities are also subject to more implicit pressures from the host society” Brennan et al, 2004: 11). According to this report the university is a highly contested terrain due to these competing interests, and – indeed- the dialectic plays itself out in that there are hegemonic notions because there are counter hegemonic notions. As such, the analysis of this report draws on the role the university then plays on societies looking to transform, while the university itself is not independent of the structure of that particular society. For the purposes of this study, this report shows that the contradictions that play out in South African society inform the shape and form of the university, and hence #FMF is a consequence of the realities of the society it is in. Importantly, it shows the contestation for the higher education space, as its ability to engender norms and values is undoubted.

For the purpose of this study there will be a particular focus on higher education; higher education as a public good guaranteed by the state to South African citizens. The rationale behind the focus on higher education is informed by the question my study seeks to investigate.

### 1.2.1 #FeesMustFall – Locating the Case

This study investigates a case of a mass student movement, #FeesMustFall, in the South African higher education complex which came to prominence in 2015 where the #FeesMustFall movement rose to national and global recognition for its fight for free tertiary education. This movement, which is an iteration of long standing battles between students and the state, manifested most universities in South Africa, organizing protests, marches and using a range of tactics in attempts to pressure the state into giving in on its central demand for free education. The #FeesMustFall movement takes the shape of a social movement of students as it manages to organize students from different student formations under one banner and a central demand for free decolonial education. Smelser, (2013) define a social movements as a:



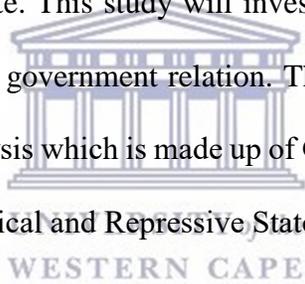
“... Loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or the prevention of a change in society’s structure or values. Although social movements differ in size, they are all essentially collective. That is, they result from the more or less spontaneous coming together of people whose relationships are not defined by rules and procedures but who merely share a common outlook on society.”

The characteristics of a social movement, which are detectable within the make-up of FMF and Smelser (2013)’s definition, are: i). being loosely organized ii) diverse group of people united by one objective iii) usually non-partisan having a fluid and flat leadership structure. The Fees Must

Fall movement ticks these characteristics of a social movement and therefore allows for its analysis within the framework of civil society – as will be dealt with in depth in the framework of analysis.

This definition of social movements used in this chapter reflects the general experience with its loose nature of organization and mobilization and its sporadic way in which it strategizes and acts.

The need to carefully characterize #FMM as a social movement of students is because of the intention to demonstrate how it has affected the observation of relations between the state and civil society at a more general level, and relations between student and government at a more specific level. The students have engaged themselves in a process of challenging the government's position on providing higher education, and this can be viewed, at a more general level as civil society challenging the hegemony of the state. This study will investigate the nuance that exists in this state vs. civil society and student vs. government relation. This will all be done by employing a carefully selected framework of analysis which is made up of Gramsci's concept of hegemony and supplemented by Althusser's Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses.



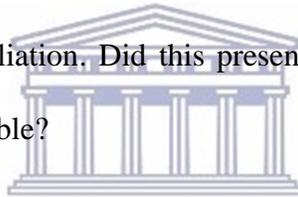
The impact and effect the fallist movement has had in post-apartheid civil society engagements with the state in South Africa has been notable. For instance, it has reignited the debates on decolonization through challenging colonial symbols and institutional culture in some parts. Also, it is important to draw on the importance of education for a developing country like South Africa, and to look at the contribution education makes in a country like South Africa. Hence, the emphasis on an expansion on higher education in the context of South Africa and what makes it a priority for civil society, as it were. Ultimately, all this must be viewed in the context of a growing tendency of civil society to contest the state in the second decade of democracy in South Africa.

### 1.2.2 Post-apartheid State – Civil Society relations in Context

Taking a retrospective look at key moments of contention in the developing relationship between state and civil society in the context of a democratic era in South Africa will help locate the problem this study seeks to contend with. In the post-apartheid era in South Africa, the state, through one of its principal arms, the government, has kept fairly communal relations between itself and civil society. The African National Congress (ANC) led government has enjoyed an alignment in language and action between itself and civil society for a fair while. Naturally, these relations are attributed to the hegemonic presence of the ANC in the political landscape of South Africa. The ANC has enjoyed popular support in South Africa during its engagement in the armed struggle and even in the run up to the first democratic election in 1994. This was made evident by the overwhelming support for the ANC which saw it win electoral support with a whopping two thirds majority; getting 12,237,655 votes, and 252 out of 400 seats. (Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2000). However, in the course of these ‘smooth’ relations between the state and civil society, as managed by the ANC-led government, there has also been a time of genuine contention and discourse between civil society and the state. Hence, in the nine other nationwide elections the ANC support has been dwindling.

One example of this contention is the 1998 Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) which is a social movement, formed by Zachie Achmat, an anti-apartheid activist, advocating for HIV/Aids treatment (Mbali, 2006). The basis for the TAC’s formation laid squarely on the government of the then President, Thabo Mbeki’s, reluctance to making antiretroviral drugs available to those infected with HIV/AIDS in South Africa. This social movement, driven by a single issue, grew in its strides as one of the first counter hegemonic forces in democratic South Africa (Mbali, 2006). The TAC stood firmly against the ANC government’s handling of the pandemic at the time and

created an unprecedented situation of notable ideological divergence between the state and civil society in South Africa. Moreover, in the year 2012, almost a decade and a half later, we witnessed the killing of Marikana miners by the South African Police Service. This occurred after a labour dispute between mineworkers and LonMin, a mining company, could not be resolved (BBBC News, 2012). The Marikana moment presented to us a second notable moment where a section of civil society was organized for an issue and it seemingly stood diametrically opposed to how the hegemonic ANC led government wished to resolve the matter. Then, finally, in the year 2015 we witnessed a wave of arguably the most broadly organized student protests in post-apartheid SA that emerge as a moment that threw a challenge to the hegemony of the state as led by the ANC government. All the #FMF branches in various universities stood firm with the demand for free education regardless of political affiliation. Did this present a counter hegemonic idea of how higher education is to be made available?



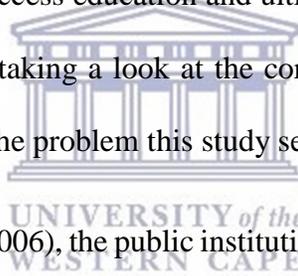
The study further unpacks the importance of #FMF by acknowledging that it does not manifest itself in isolation of recent historical relations, but in fact, is a continuance of a growing tendency of some sections of civil society to challenge the state on key issues spelled out in the Constitution.

### **1.3 Research Problem and Rationale**

The government's understanding of its role in making education accessible for all should necessarily be derived from constitutional prescripts. As such, there is no ambiguity around the fact that the government, as spelled out in section 29 of the constitution, must make tertiary education progressively available. However, there are what seems to be deliberately ambiguous words used in the clause such as 'progressively' and 'accessible'. This, however, does not mean that the efforts of government can be explained as progressive, or in fact that it cannot. The

intervention here is to have a nuanced examination of why the government does not meet expectations with this public good, and the response to such.

Moreover, this is a right, promised in the constitution that is not delivered to the satisfaction of some sections of South African citizens – indigent students for example. Hence, the state’s inability to deliver this ‘expected’ right has seen indigent university students hard-pressed economically and forced to engage the state in attempts to convince it to fulfil this constitutional commitment. As a result, conditions for political agitation become more apparent. This logic follows a pattern that flows as follows: there is a constitutional right promised to citizens (students), the citizens are not satisfied with delivery or adherence to this, it thus affects their lives materially through their inability to access education and ultimately the grounds for mobilization become much more viable. Perhaps taking a look at the core values that inform the funding of public universities will better locate the problem this study seeks to confront.



According to Steyn and De Villiers (2006), the public institutions of higher learning funding model has evolved over the years due to changing governments and the need to cater for society at large. Funding of universities is by no means a process isolated from the functioning of the state and its ideological outlook. The New Funding Formula (NFF) adopted by the government in 2004 unpacks the benefits that come with funding institutions using a formula, as opposed to the old system which allowed for a more political and biased funding of public institutions. One of the advantages of this formula being “Subsidy formulae are designed to be flexible in order to accommodate as many fluctuating factors (input parameters) as possible. Cost escalation is an example of such a factor and needs to be incorporated in any legitimate subsidy formula” (Steyn & De Villiers, 2009: 13). This alludes to the flexibility that this formula allows the state to have when allocating funds; taking into consideration the pressure that is increasingly put on indigent

students, yet it seems that the government is working against the grain of its own policy. The intricate change from a state that catered primarily for the minority to one that seeks to cater for all cannot be overemphasized, however, the pace of the transformation seems to be what many families in South Africa are at loggerheads with.

Moreover, universities in South Africa are now faced with challenges that transcend the obvious discussions incidental to regime change, but rather speak to the conception of a post-apartheid South African reality; creating a University reflective of this reality. These are challenges of transformation, equity and the creation of an inclusive university space which speak to the curriculum, access to and the quality of higher education. These debates have gone beyond the normal transformative parameters as they now seek to challenge the culture of Universities by criticizing the exclusive nature of University spaces and practices. The challenge of exorbitant university fees is one dominant in the discourse for South Africa's higher education transformation. The lack of creative solutions by government has created a sense of antagonistic relations between the government and poor and working class families. The plight of the students who cannot afford tertiary education, is a plight they inherit from their families and one which they still share. Therefore, the #FMF movement adds to debates that exist in certain corridors of South Africa about the material benefits of democracy.

Exploring the #FMF movement in isolation of broader social relations in South Africa will give results void of qualitative integrity; in the sense that the conditions that give rise to the #FMF movement are intricately related to broader social issues such as unemployment, inequality, poverty and lack of opportunity. Therefore, in order for this study to accurately detail the problem it will view it in relation to factors contributing to it; to the broader social relations that inform it.

Mattes (2011) looks at the South African case, where the apartheid regime was overthrown because of a large contingent of the South African society standing opposed to the political institutions of the said regime. He argues “apartheid ultimately fell because the norms of racial separation, racial hierarchy and white superiority were rejected by the vast majority of the South African populace” (Mattes, 2011: 2). Hence, apartheid South Africa was marred with contradictions between civil society and political institutions. This line of literature is relevant for this study as it lends an aiding hand to the context of the problem. For instance, in the apartheid South Africa era all people were governed by apartheid laws, and apartheid survived for a notable period, 1948 to 1994 to be exact (Mattes, 2011). The longevity of the regime meant that in one way or the other its ideas of political society were the dominant ideas, whether these ideas enjoy hegemony through intellectual consent or force is another debate (which this study is concerned with and will deal with as it progresses). However, there came a point where in apartheid South Africa these dominant ideas, primarily sustained through coercion, faced the challenge of a society whose values and attitudes stood diametrically opposed to the political institutions of the racist apartheid regime. This contradiction usually prompts demand for change and that is what had happened in South Africa leading up to the CODESA negotiations.

In 2010 a working group constituted by the then Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, was tasked to investigate the possibilities of free higher education structure. Calls have been made to the then Minister of Higher Education, Dr Blade Nzimande to drive the agenda for free education by relooking the current National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). When there is a critical review of the history of apartheid in South Africa which left scores of the population systemically disadvantaged, together with the quality of basic education offered in democratic South Africa, the loan structure is bound to be problematic. According to the criteria

set out in the NSFAS Act, the loans are meant to be accessed by indigent South Africans who are most likely products of a poor quality basic education (NSFAS Act, 1999). An evaluating article by Price Waterhouse Coopers (2015) states that “State contributions to university education declined from 49% at the beginning of the century to 40% by 2012, while the burden on students increased from 24% to 31% during the same period. It is therefore not surprising that each calendar year starts off with student protests demanding free education or lower tuition fees or a cap on tuition fees”. Which indicates how access to further education moves further from those who have less financial capacity. Therefore, all these are contributing factors to the problem of access to education, amidst constitutional guarantees that suggest it shall be accessible to all.

It is upon this backdrop that a history of student battles have been aimed at the state and university for more access to higher education. The identification of education as a chance to upward social mobility is clear and sharpens the conditions even more. #FMF is a consequence of this contradiction, and as such the study looks to understand what this movement reveals about the relationship between the state and civil society; through the lens of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony.

The study will be organized into two parts. Part A being the identification and explication of hegemonic notions and how they have come to be hegemonic. Part B being a test of #FMF against these hegemonic notions. What impact does it have, if any, and what does this then reveal about the relationship between the state and civil society in South Africa. To get to this the study asks:

***Whether and the extent, if at all, #FeesMustFall is counter hegemonic force?***

### **Sub Research Questions**

- *What is the hegemonic view on the accessibility of further education?*

- *How does the state see its role in providing further education and how does this relate to hegemonic notions?*
- *How does #FMF see the role of the state in providing further education, and how does this relate to hegemonic notions?*
- *Are the understandings of the state and #FMF different? If so, what does this reveal about the relations between state and civil society in South Africa?*

#### **1.4 Structure of Mini Theses**

This Master's Mini theses consists of six chapters, namely the Introduction and Background, Situating the Study, A Framework for Analysis, Research Methods and Design, Understanding #FMF and Understanding the Relationship between Theory and Data. The study is systematically organized in this way in order to maximize the power of the inquiry. The chapters follow a strategic and logical pattern in order to develop the argument coherently.

Chapter one and two serve to unpack the problem by looking at the background of education and student movements in South Africa. These chapters also provide the rationale for the study by looking into a historical investigation of the evolution of the higher education landscape in South Africa.

Chapter three provides a framework of analysis for the study. This framework will be employed as a tool for understanding the data and answering the researching question. The framework is fortified by the research method and design, in Chapter four, which includes techniques such as auto-ethnography, interviews, and other sources of primary data. Chapter five will then lay out the findings from the data collection process. It will distil the findings carefully in order to make for a seamless process of analysis.

Finally, chapter six will provide an analysis that shows the relationship between the theory and the data. This chapter will test the theory by punting it against the data in order to answer the research question posed by this study. It will then be followed by a brief conclusion that will provide an overview of the study's work and some final thoughts on the problem.



## **CHAPTER 2 - Situating the Study**

*“Students all over the world are known as the game changers of society. We are the ones who make a fuss about things that matter to us and we have enough youthful spirit combined with radical ideas to make a big change in our communities.” (Fleisch and Aryaan, 2016)*

### **2.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to provide the context for the study. This chapter, fittingly, follows the introduction chapter, which has laid out the background, research rationale, research problem and structure. The intention of this chapter is to situate the study subject of the inquiry into its historical and present circumstances. Therefore, the chapter provides a contextual picture of higher education and the role of student movements both internationally and locally. It delves into the essential factors that give rise to the problem that the study investigates by examining the possible triggers for the movement, focus on higher education and locating the student movement both locally and internationally.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of March in 2015 South Africa woke up to a demand that would engulf discussions in all facets of the public domain for weeks after. It was the day the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) movement began – with Chumani Maxwele, a student activist at the University of Cape Town, throwing a bucket of human feces on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes (Martin, 2015). For some, Maxwele’s controversial act was seen as theatrical, while for others it marked a defining moment for the challenging of remnants of colonialism through its symbols. The #RMF movement went on to challenge issues of transformation, employment equity and curriculum changes as part of its campaign for Rhodes’ statue to fall. After extensive pressure in the form of mass student protests, engagements and finally a University Assembly at the University of Cape Town, the council finally

decided to have the statue removed from its majestic position, overlooking most of the beautiful land adjacent to the university on the hill (UCT University Assembly, 2015). This was arguably one of the most historic moments in South African higher education; and as important as it was, it was not the last for that year.

In mid-October 2015 the students of the Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg responded to a call made by its Council to increase student tuition fees. This response was not unique, as the student movement in South Africa has always been characterized by its engagement with University managers over fees, conditions at residences and other issues affecting students. This time, however, proved to be different. The Wits students called for fees to fall which generated a vast interest from civil society. The students of UCT followed the call, then came the Rhodes University in Graham's town and the rest of the Universities followed suit (Kekana et al, 2015). The #FMF movement existed in almost every university campus in South Africa and, unlike #RMF's short existence, had a more sustained wave of protests and confrontation with the state. This student movement, characterized by its incessant fight against the commodification of higher education, went on to draw the attention of parts of the South African citizenry and enjoyed some international attention as well. This is a student movement that managed to mobilize unprecedented support for a student cause, as it galvanized the support of trade union movements, university staff, academics, and even certain parents of students. The very intriguing class, race, gender and cultural intersection in the #FMF movement begs the question of the conditions that make it come about and how these differences seemed to matter very little.

## **2.2 Why Higher Education**

The #FeesMustFall movement takes up a social movement formation that consists primarily of students, and, at the time of this wave, enjoyed the support of civil society organizations and other

sectors of society. The context under which this movement emerged is intricately connected to the general calls for equality, development and human dignity in South Africa that can be seen from numerous mass service delivery protests and labour issues emanating from both the public and the private sector (Alexander, 2010). However, as articulated by David and Waghid (2016), the 2015 #FMM protests were not the first of their kind in South African universities. They argue that “students at poorer institutions that cater almost exclusively for black students such as the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Fort Hare University and the Tshwane University of Technology have been protesting routinely against rising fees and the cost of higher education since 1994” (David & Waghid, 2016: 1). This points to the fact that the #FMM protests have, on the foundations of decades of student activism, reached popularity not only because of the issues but because of the class of the people it affects. David & Waghid (2016) view the general media attention and public reaction to #FMM protests as a reflection of entrenched inequality in South Africa – this they argue is not only remnants of apartheid society but a consequence of post-apartheid policy as well. Hence, the biggest debate #FMM brings to the table are the constraints that socio-economic realities of the majority of South Africans impede access to higher education.

Access to higher education is a pressing matter in South Africa, amidst quite a number of social transformation issues. This study concedes that there are other challenges that might be seen as more pressing; such as high rates of unemployment, a high demand for decent housing and healthcare – which are all, when carefully analyzed, traceable to the remnants of colonial and apartheid legacies. In as much as this study will demonstrate the importance of higher education in a country with particular historical realities as the one in question, it is not the role or intention of the study to create a barometer of public goods’ importance to the citizens of South Africa. As such, the study notes that higher education, however, is a particular public good that is sought after

by South Africans for the material development of their lives. As such, the study endeavours to lay bare the conditions that give rise to #FMF by locating the importance of the #FeesMustFall movement in the context of a changing South African political landscape.

Public goods that are expected by citizens of any nation as a result of respective social contracts are subject to the state's ability to meet them practically. Therefore, economics is at the heart of delivering these public goods for a state, and a flourishing economy naturally makes it fiscally possible. As such it helps to look at higher education specifically as a public good. If the demands of the #FMF movement are anything to go by, it seems that this public good has been one which the state has not delivered to the satisfaction of the citizenry. Hence, the conditions for #FMF as a movement to come into such existence even twenty three years post-apartheid. Statistics show that out of 700 000 matriculants who make it through the basic education system, only a 100 000 get university admission (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Notwithstanding questions of the quality of basic education, this number is still glaringly low. Moreover, there are many reasons that could be postulated for the state's shortcomings but that is not the purpose of the study; the point is to understand the conditions which allow #FMF to be formed in order to answer the question of whether it is a counter hegemonic force or not. It is to give a historical examination of the social conditions that give rise to the movement.

Increases in higher education fees have outstripped inflation since the year 2008 (Statistics South Africa, 2016). This naturally applies pressure on the poor, working and some aspects of the middle class South Africans who struggle to put their children through tertiary education. Also, in the Ministerial Committee Report on Higher Education, the Democratic Alliance, official opposition party in South Africa, stated that between the year 2000 and 2010 state funding per full time student has dropped by 1.1% annually while fees of these students increase by 2.5% on average annually

in the same period. (Department of Higher Education South Africa, October 2015). This is supported by the figures indicated in the Statistics South Africa annual report 2014/2015, as illustrated above. All these are factors which contribute to a frustration that has built up over a decade for the indigent citizens of South Africa. The state's under funding of higher education means that the burden falls on the students themselves in the form of fees. As the years progress, the pressure reaches certain untenable levels which allow for conditions to mobilize and engage the state to alleviate the financial pressure that comes with higher education. Ultimately, in a liberal democratic set up, imbued with inequalities imposed by capitalism, like South Africa it is difficult for most people to secure decent employment without a qualification from a tertiary institution. And as that logic prevails, the increasing demand for access to tertiary education is inevitable. Hence, higher education is sought after because it provides a gateway, at least in South Africa, out of disadvantages that at times, and on the majority, were imposed by the political society of the recent past. The historical realities faced by South Africa contribute to the challenges of access to higher education.



Bunting (1994) analyses the South African higher education landscape in the infancy stage of democracy, in attempts to locate the legacy of inequality inherited from centuries of oppression and racial segregation. Bunting (1994) makes the case for three primary causes for the lack of access of previously disadvantaged groups to higher education in South Africa. First he cites the economic variable – “black applicants and students from economically deprived backgrounds have generally not been able to afford the fees charged by mainstream universities in South Africa” (Bunting, 1994: 43). Here he notes the fact that there is a limitation of access to employment, owning of property and running far reaching business for the blacks and this informs the incapacity to afford university fees (Bunting 1994). Secondly he delves into the fact that admissions policies

were designed in a discriminatory manner using standards of secondary education as a barometer of acceptance, while the state was providing an undoubtedly subpar senior secondary education for the previously disadvantaged groups. This meant that the criterion for acceptance is unfair because the disparities in access to resources and support are glaring. Lastly he notes language as a factor. He argues that because native South Africans were subjected to Bantu Education, which forced Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, which was met with notable resistance, the language became a barrier to black applicants. This can be seen contemporary student struggles in Universities such as Stellenbosch and the University of Pretoria, where the language policy has been a bone of contention.

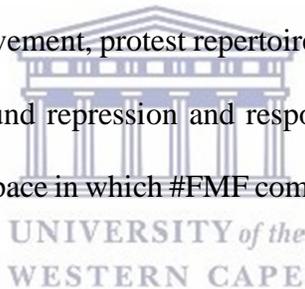
The three factors mentioned by Bunting (1994) make up, primarily, the causes for resistance in post-apartheid South Africa particularly in the university space. Generally, South Africans could draw from these cases of exclusion why they needed to organize themselves in attempts to overthrow the then oppressive regime. At present, the legacy of that regime and its remnants in institutional outlook, policy, and culture of the university in South Africa still haunt the democratic era. Hence, student organizations like the South African Students' Congress (SASCO), Pan Africanist Student Organization (PASO) (later known as Pasma) and the South African Student Organization (SASO) that were formed to forge a struggle against racial discrimination and admission in universities then, are still at odds with issues of access to education now. However, the face of the problem has changed, but the logic is arguably very much intact. The post-apartheid democratic government's attempt to address these inequalities is the introduction of a student loan scheme in the form of NSFAS, which is a means of disarming the barriers to access previously experienced by disadvantaged groups in society (NSFAS Act, 1999). Nonetheless, the very student organizations mentioned above are up in arms almost every year fighting for more loan allocations,

at the moderate, and even the abolishing of NSFAS and the introduction of a fee free tertiary education, at the extreme. According to Independent News Online, the year before #FMM (2014) NSFAS had been the cause of unrest at many universities, “universities were hit by protests on Monday as students expressed dissatisfaction over a shortage of funds from the National Student Financial Scheme (NSFAS)” (Independent News Online, 2014). To understand these battles it is important to locate and trace the evolution of the student movement in South Africa.

## **2.3 Locating the Student Movement**

### **2.3.1 Student Movements, Protest Repertoires and Response Repertoires**

In this section a review of student movement, protest repertoires, leadership and activist structures, strategies and tactics and issues around repression and response repertoires will be considered. This is to properly contextualize the space in which #FMM comes about and the history that informs its base.



Student movements in South Africa have historically, much like students in most parts of the world, been important in the demand for change in various societies. For a better understanding of student movements, protests and response repertoires, the study reviews literature that deals with student movements locally and in Chile, America, and other parts of Africa.

In post-apartheid South Africa student activism has been underpinned largely by questions of access and exclusion – which are all related to finances. Koen, Cele and Libhaber (2006) write a telling article in which they attempt to analyze the genesis of student protests in South Africa. In the paper they deal with the implications of democratizing higher education in South Africa – being participation in governance, protests and exclusions. The historical reasoning they give for

high volumes of both academic and financial exclusions – which results in protests – is traced back to the under preparedness of learners by the basic education system and the socio economic backgrounds of the vast majority of the students (Koen, Cele & Libhaber, 2006). Of course, the story is not completely exhausted in the article, however, it sheds important light on the genesis of the post-apartheid South African student movement. #FMF is also a microcosm of this evolution, one which is important but not in the least unpredictable. It is a culmination of decades of frustrations with neo liberal education policies within higher education, which plays itself out in a number of other countries even outside Africa.

Chile, a country which saw a return to democracy in 1990, has also seen a fair share of student revolts targeted at the neo liberal policy framework in the higher education sector. Cabalin (2012) notes that deepening inequality had been the bedrock of student dissent towards both the university and the state. He argues that Chile developed a democracy of elites that went uncontested for quite some time. Until, of course, the economically hard pressed students who could either no longer afford to stay in university or guarantee access to deserving but financially incapable students, took it upon themselves to form the Chilean Education Movement (Cabalin, 2012). This movement, established essentially as a living critique of the general privatization of the education sector, stood diametrically opposed to the exclusion of students based on financial status.

In Africa, South Africa in particular, Luescher has made the case of students' claim to representation quite fairly with his works over the years in the field of student politics and activism in Africa. In the 2016 publication of *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism* he further develops the nature of the students' demand to participate in governance. He writes “students must be thought of as a political group or constituency on campus whose concerns must be addressed due to their ability to organize and affect the academic functioning of a university”

(Luescher & Klemencic, 2016: 44). Here one can draw the positionality of students in the South African context, in that students have over the years cemented themselves as an important stakeholder in the overall governance of the university. What is important here though is the insurrectionary measures used to demand what is democratically a given right: the right to representation. Therefore, there is a pattern in the evolution of student activism, protest repertoires and cultures of resistance that shows that students employ counter-hegemonic elements as tactics to gain access to the hegemonic structure of decision making. This ability of the students to affect academic functioning (the core business of the university) can be seen as leverage with a double edged sword – it can yield results, at the expense of those who will benefit: the students.

At the core of the university's existence is the academic project, which in more cases than not involves the student. Altbach (2016: xi) notes that “some of the earliest universities, in medieval Italy, were established and managed by students”. This observation places the students, as a body, at the heart of the idea of a university. However, over time, universities have been taken over by faculties and have in some cases adopted an attitude of seeing students as “burdens, customers, or sources of income but seldom as the key rationale for the university” (Altbach, 2016: xi). This shift in control of universities has had consequences for university governance and management. The shifting from student centered universities to managerial faculty run research spaces has resulted in students organizing to fight against the many consequences of such reforms. The legacy of student run universities' short legs were also due to the lack of leadership and range of students, which the faculty could accurately provide (Altbach, 2016). Therefore, the student movement, over many decades, has been born in response to the move away from student centered universities, to fight against the governance and administrative consequences of viewing the student as a

“customer” and not the original “rationale for the university”. Students, internationally, as such, developed a character of resistance either to their local issues or to broader societal issues.

The evolution of the student movement, through student activism geared at attaining meaningful student representation, has been in line with the development of the modern university. Fittingly, students in the present day continue to organize themselves in attempts to advocate for student issues and general socio-political issues. From the challenging of structural reforms in universities to challenging authoritarian governments, as in the case of the Egypt Arab Spring. The students have throughout embodied a counter hegemonic character, and have over the years replicated this spirit of resistance. Notably though, the positionality of students in the overall governance and administration of universities also contributes to this character. Besides the factor of youth rebellion, the students are never in the position to implement policy directly without having to negotiate their way in the student-University manager relation or the student-government relation. Hence, it is therefore strategic, at times, that the students employ some form of radical ways of gaining popular support for an issue (Leuscher, 2016). This seems to be a characteristic that has developed with the student movement over time, particularly because universities have continued to be mechanized and now represent a structure of rigid bureaucracy that seems to put student interests at secondary importance.

In Latin America during the early 1900s the Cordoba revolts were led by students. The student movement in Latin America had been responding to the seemingly systemic marginalization of student interest in the governance and management of the university (Luescher; Klemencic; Mugume, 2016). In the 1960s there were revolts in Western Europe and North America, with efforts from large scores of students along with various social partners responding to societal discontent (Luescher; Klemencic; Mugume, 2016). In Africa students have played their role in

challenging colonial rule and governments born from liberation movements that turned authoritarian (Luescher; Klemencic; Mugume, 2016). Hence, students, all over the world, have been at the centre of the action during times of discontent or intellectual shifts of world view points. It would seem that students have a certain positionality that allows them to facilitate rebellion, because of the energy they have, and also the youth factor. Chomsky (1969) wrote about the role of the university in a time of crisis. He wrote this at a time of major student revolts in the United States of America. He argued that “the renewed concern with university reform is in large measure a consequence of student activism” (Chomsky, 1969: 2). He locates student activism as the catalyst for the reimagining of the University in the Americas and in Europe at the time. The questioning of the University’s role was centered on the classical idea of a University, at the time, which was to regurgitate dominant ideas in society, moved the academy to a more inquisitive, alternate and challenging position. This important period gave rise to the way we see the University today as a public institution preoccupied with the improvement of society through scientific inquiry. This highlights the important and inevitable debates the student movement in America brought to the fore. Chomsky argues that “This society must change drastically to survive, so if the University does not contribute to this social change, it becomes insignificant” (Chomsky, 1969:3). Chomsky’s view provides an international lens through which the student movement can be located in the debates to reform, rethink and challenge the University.

In South Africa the positionality of the ‘student’ is not too different from the one described by Chomsky (1969) and Luescher et al (2016), regardless of the differing conditions and contexts. The famous 1976 Soweto uprisings that saw an international uproar against apartheid are most people’s initial reference to the student movement in South Africa. However, in the later days of apartheid there had been various other formations of resistance in South Africa. This was seen in

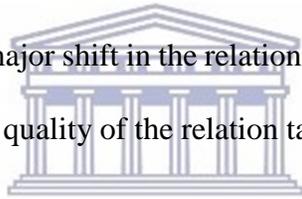
the organization of the workers in the form of unions, students in the form of South African Students Organization (SASO) then later South African Students' Congress (SASCO) and the Pan Africanist Students Organization (PASO). The constitutions of these student formations acknowledge being components of the respective broader political parties. Consequently, the ideological positioning of the student organizations is somewhat informed by that of the organizations they are components of.

## **2.5 The Rise of #FeesMustFall**

This section will examine the issues that led to the conditions that made the rise of the #FeesMustFall movement possible. This will be done through the lenses of two scholars, namely; Pillay (2016) and De Vos (2015). I will look at Pillay's examining of the role of psychology in the rise of #FMF and De Vos's constitutional angle. The purpose of the section is to provide the context within which #FMF comes into being by taking a closer look at the factors that may have made the ground fertile for student mobilization.

Pillay (2016) catalogues significant events and moments that recently took place in the South African higher education space which led to the eruption of movements such as #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall. Because the relationship between the student and government does not exist in isolation, there are other critical relations in society that, when viewed together, play a role in the formation of the mass student movement and the issues it looks to address. In attempts to accurately place #FeesMustFall the study will look at literature on #FeesMustFall in order to slightly unpack and have a clear context of the movement.

Pillay uses critical psychology as his theoretical foregrounding of analysis of #FeesMustFall. There is an examining of the role of psychology in understanding the rise of these movements. Hence, critical psychology has a very questioning and status quo testing positionality which Pillay employs quite neatly in the characterization of the #FMF movement. He argues that civil society became inactive after the 1994 elections because of narratives of reconciliation, forgiveness and unity (Pillay, 2016). Noting the reason postulated by Pillay, there is also the element of trust from the electorate which saw it step back and allow the ANC to lead hoping it would do all good by itself without being held accountable. My intervention here is first that I agree with Pillay's position on the pacifying nature of the democratic state. Secondly, it is to say that there is a time where civil society realizes that the democratic government can, too, be guilty of neglecting its responsibility. This then results in a major shift in the relations between state and civil society; the tensions grow, demands flare and the quality of the relation takes a new shape.



Furthermore, there is a new cadre of student activists who feel shortchanged by the deal of 1994 and are engaged in questions of exclusion, broken political promises and privilege in higher education (Pillay, 2016). This generation propelled by the psychological violence, amongst other things, exerted on it by the status quo. Hence, the response becomes mass and violent at times. Pillay's arguments here contribute to an understanding of the social, psychological causatives for #FeesMustFall that are perhaps outside the realm of the socio-political and allows my study to be flexible enough to understand this when engaging with the findings. The consideration of exclusion and inequality as psychologically damaging better informs the engagement I might have with the findings.

On the other hand, Pierre De Vos, a constitutional specialist in SA, makes a legal case on the question of exclusion on the basis of finances. De Vos (2015) outlines the context of the debacle

of higher education funding. In his article he notes that “between 2000 and 2010, state funding per student fell by 1.1% annually, in real terms” (De Vos, 2015: 1). This lays a basis for the outrage in increasing fees as students have been bearing the brunt of the deficit throughout the years. Moreover, he argues that University managers themselves did not protest these budget cuts, if they did, they did so silently (De Vos 2015). This meant that universities had to administer budget cuts and increase student fees. The budget cuts affect the quality of the education provided and affects those who can and those who cannot pay.

As such, De Vos (2015) argues that the state and University managers have been infringing on two constitutional rights of those who have the ability and inclination to finish their studies, but cannot afford to pay. He argues that unlike other social and economic rights, contained in sections 26 and 27 – where the state has the flexibility of “within available resources” at its disposal – the right to education is explicitly prescribed in the constitution with the language of progressive realization (De Vos, 2015). It must be noted that there are potentially blurred lines that could arise in interpretation of this clause in the constitution. For instance, words like ‘reasonable’, ‘progressively’ and ‘available’ could themselves be open for interpretation and bureaucratic manipulation or misunderstanding at the point of implementation. Noting the potential ambiguity in interpretation, there was a consultation on approaches of interpreting legislation for clarity. According to Barak (2005) the purposive approach of interpretation combines both the subjective and objective elements of a statute or an enactment. He argues that the purposive approach, which is used in parliamentary systems, allows for the judiciary to interpret and scribe an act or statute with the consideration that “subjective elements include the intention of the author of the text, whereas the objective elements include the intent of the reasonable author and the legal system’s fundamental values” (Barak, 2005: 12). Therefore, the intentions of the legislative arm of the state,

parliament, in this case must be considered when interpreting any statute. Moreover, there are instructive words in the clause; words like ‘the government MUST’, which are unambiguously directing what must be done. It is then important to evaluate the view of government against that which is spelt out in the constitution, regarding the accessibility of education. The language of progressive realization apportions duty on the state to take immediate steps to achieve this goal (De Vos, 2015). He argues that instead the state has engaged itself in “deliberately retrogressive measures” by cutting university budgets and not finding innovative ways to keep universities afloat with the burden less on the student.

While, Dr. Blade Nzimande, former Minister of Higher Education and Training, said in a statement released in October 2015 that it is the department’s priority to make sure that education is available for the poor, “Government remains committed to funding poor students in higher education in the context of a constrained fiscal climate”. (Department of Higher Education South Africa, October 2015). The constitutional provision (although potentially ambiguous), the post-apartheid South African ethos of transformation embedded in “A better life for all” and the utterances by the Minister of Higher education, read together, give an indication that there is not much variance between the students’ and governments’ understanding of the role of government in providing tertiary education. Hence, it is problematic that the state is derelict on a responsibility it clearly admits to having. This contradiction provides the basis of the students to engage the state, especially students who cannot afford tertiary education.

Hence, De Vos’s (2015) arguments tie in very well with the problem that this study looks to contend with. It raises critical issues around the form and substance of the South African democracy; what it is supposed to be vs. what it actually is. Furthermore, De Vos reinforces the responsibility the state has, in this case, to make education available for the poor. This allows for

the study to use this understanding to better contextualize the conditions that make it possible for #FeesMustFall to be formed. It also provides an explanation of the role of the state, and why higher education has a unique description in the constitution.

Having evaluated the context of the case and the problem, the study employs a carefully developed framework of analysis through which to answer the research question. The framework entails Gramsci's theory of hegemony, complemented by Althusser's useful identification of particular institutions used by the state to manufacture consent. This theory will be useful as it allows for a deeper insight into the relations between state and civil society, and also explains the logic of #FMF through analysis of its decisions and actions. Contending with the state as a hegemonic force, the study will evaluate, through the theory and data, how it sustains its hegemony if at all and as such answer the principal question of counter-hegemony as it relates to #FMF.

In conclusion, this chapter helped frame the context within which the problem of this study is located. The chapter aids the study by situating the problem by ways of looking at the broader issues in society that in one way or another contributed to the rise of #FMF. It unpacks the need to isolate higher education in this study, and examines the reasons for the mass audience the movement garnered. Moreover, by looking at the history of student movements, resistance and protest, it draws a picture fit enough to act as a precursor for the theoretical discussion which follow it.

## CHAPTER 3 – A Framework for Analysis

*“The ideas of a ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”*

*(Karl Marx, 1968: 19)*

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will methodically build a framework for analysis. The chapter will systemically navigate between the literature and key concepts and theory through drawing on the literature to assess the progression of the debates in the fields of civil society, the state and student movements. Also, there will be a detailed discussion of key concepts such as hegemony, coercion and consent. The boundaries of the literature review are informed by the extension of the problem and the context of the case to be investigated. Therefore, this chapter will look at literature spanning from the apartheid era in South Africa to post-apartheid democracy. A literature review is defined as “A review of surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem being investigated” (Labaree, 2009). The purpose is to locate this study in order to find a gap or possibility to extend knowledge as a way of making this study viable with a credible contribution. This literature review is located specifically within the theory chapter of this study with a deliberate attempt to build a framework for research from the chosen theory and the review of literature.

The chapter then looks at Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, and the study will employ Althusser’s concept of ideological state apparatus vs. repressive state apparatus, which is largely Gramsci’s concept of coercion and consent explained with a bit more practical emphasis, as supplement to Gramsci’s theory. Moreover, for the purposes of maximizing the explanatory power offered by

both the concepts and the literature, the study will move systemically between the literature and the concepts to ultimately establish the golden thread which will be the theoretical framing of this study.

### **3.2 The Logic of the State**

The state has been theorized extensively over the centuries. Many leading philosophers have preoccupied themselves with reasons for the state, the state of nature and further theoretical contributions and suggestions on how to organize human life. This is the consequence of the process of defining the state being inherently marred with the intentions of justifying a particular political strategy couched in the form of human organization. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, there will not be an extensive emphasis on the accurate definition of the state, so to speak, but will much rather deal with the development of the state over different historical periods. The state is an important concept to unpack in this study because in order to understand the relationship between the government and the student, one must examine the ‘field’ in which this relation plays out. Also, in order to examine counter-hegemonic behavior it is important to identify what exactly is hegemonic. Thus, the theoretical position of this study is informed by Gramsci’s theorization of the state as a mechanism that is not neutral nor absent in political and economic life, but rather is engineered to serve a particular class of people (Gramsci, 1971). The study makes this case, and will proceed to show it throughout the unpacking of this framework for analysis.

In order to evaluate the counter hegemonic character of #FeesMustFall we must understand under what kind of state it operates, and measure the actions of that state against its fundamental aims and objectives (what hegemony is it countering anyway?). Therefore, it is important to attempt to

understand the South African state and the state in general in order to get to the determinations of anything hegemonic, or counter-hegemonic for that matter. The need to unpack theories of the state by looking at various thinkers and how they have conceptualized the state over the years is to do justice to the building of a solid foundation upon which to craft the study.

Thomas Hobbes (1651), one of the earliest recorded political philosophers on the state, made an argument in *Leviathan* (1651) that all humans are born free and have the innate need to preserve their lives. His characterization of the individual human being became his premise for conceptualizing the organization of society. Hobbes coined the pure state of nature, a hypothetical assertion as to what social relations were like before the formation of political society in the form of the state, in his book *Leviathan* (1651). His argument that there is no difference in humans' mind and strength and the innate need to self-preserve led to his assertion that without humans creating an institution which they all agree to, life would be "nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1651). Hobbes does agree that this must be the collective agreement of all, and in essence a social contract of the people. This social contract gives a certain group of people the right to act on behalf of the collective interests of all people. Hobbes's contribution to the recognition of individual liberties can be traced from this pattern of reason. Thus, the guiding principle is that the state should act in the interest of the people that make it legitimate. The state should provide security, as an anarchic society is prone to the encroachment of individual liberties (Manent, 1994).

When looking at the development of western political thought, one notes that the justifications for political society have largely emanated as a result of the necessity to deal with the state of nature. Mehta (2012) argues that there are three points of emphasis that arise from the 17th century which give basis for the formation of political society. The first being "the idea that political society offers the only reasonable redress to the insecurity, fear and prospect of violence" (Mehta,

2012: 1). Here he makes the case that political society is formed as a counter to the insecurity provided by the state of nature. The need for humans to have guarantees of security and manage their fears saw the need to form one body which will take the duty of securing all from each other, so to speak. He argues that the second is that political society must expect opposition to it and must be ready to defend itself against such opposition. Then finally, he links this to political unity, which would minimize possibilities of political opposition (Mehta, 2012: 1).

Mehta (2012) holds that western political thought recalls the state of nature when it comes to security, fear and violence. Hence, the logic, at least according to Mehta, to establish the state was to mitigate these factors. However, when one looks at a more materialist analysis of the state, one can see the shift from mutual protection of individuals who consent in a social contract to the state, to an imposition of ideals. This argument is made by many critical Marxists and by Franz Fanon, who stands on opposite ends to Hobbes and Mehta, in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, when he argues that the violence of the state is perverse because it is in the name of protection (Fanon, 1963). Thus, debunking the idea of the state being inherently true to the social contract with its citizens, in terms of protection or the management of interests. Here he makes the case of how the state uses the fear that people have for anarchy, in order to impose on them an organized and secure society that represents the interests of the elite (Fanon, 1963).

Whilst, for Pierson (1996) understanding the state has to be done in relation to society. He notes, though, that the difficulty here is defining society (Pierson, 1996). He argues that societies exist beyond states, for example Canadians can form part of the Canadian society outside the boundaries of the Canadian state. This he views in contradistinction to the state, which has stricter boundaries, exclusive elements to it (Pierson, 1996). Pierson argues that the state is rigid in its criteria of who is a citizen, who it must protect and what the relations are between itself and society. Therefore,

he argues that in order to understand the state, which is quite a difficult undertaking, we must move away from the obsession of understanding ‘it’ but rather grapple with the state project (Pierson, 1996).

In addition, to attempt to understand the state without engaging some valuable liberal conceptions of it would make for a weak understanding. As mentioned earlier in this section, Hobbes (1651) argued for the necessity of the state based on liberal ideals, which are individual liberties, private property, equality and freedoms ranging from expression, association etc. (Dunn, 1979). Liberalism came into prominence during the age of enlightenment, when western political society started to be formed (Dunn, 1979). The formation, consequentially, of political society in the west was informed by liberal conceptions of the state. The general idea being that the state exists to ensure that the insecurities that are presented by a state less society are mitigated. Furthermore, it looked to establish authority in the interest of those who succumb to this authority, henceforth the rise of constitutionalism in the form of the social contract. However, the liberal state has been critiqued by Marxists such as Rosdolsky (1977) for its claim to act in the interest of all, but in reality it acts in the interest of those who control it; the ruling class. For instance, in liberal democratic states, like South Africa, there is an undertaking that states will secure the human rights of all individuals, yet liberal states support policy positions such as a free market state which hinders the state from intervening in the market, fundamentally in productive spaces. Therefore, it cannot entirely guarantee the fair and equal treatment of its citizens if it allows the market to operate unmonitored. Hence, Marx (1968) would argue that the assertion that a liberal state is there for all is an ideological obfuscation to gain consent from the exploited classes in attempts to legitimate the state in the interests of the ruling classes (Marx, 1968).

Althusser (1970) argues that “the State is a ‘machine’ of repression, which enables the ruling classes (in the nineteenth century the bourgeois class and the ‘class’ of big landowners) to ensure their domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion” (Althusser, 1970: 6). The state has apparatuses which operate merely as institutions that represent it and keep it as the ideologically dominant way of managing social relations. Mamdani (1996), not completely against Althusser’s position, argues in *Citizen and Subject*, that the post-colonial African state is one which is faced with the contradiction of bifurcation. This means that the theory of separation was the basis of the state; natives were ethicized and ruled under tribal authority as subjects, while the British were civil citizens with rights. He argues, further, that post-colonial democratization in Africa is not successful because it has inherited the colonial state, which has a logic designed for native oppression for colonial, and ultimately capitalist gains. Ultimately, Mamdani held that the state, particularly in Africa, in its current form is very repressive due to its continuance of the colonial logic of divide and rule. Mamdani is interesting to mention here as he rests the faults of post-colonial African democracies on the perversion of African institutions by the colonial state. He therefore argues for a complete dismantling of the state and a new one to be imagined. However, as important in some parts as it may be, Mamdani’s critique falls short of identifying the reason for the state’s domineering effect. It does not go as far as unpacking the economic interests at play and therefore fails to accurately understand the perversion of the state beyond the effects of colonialism.

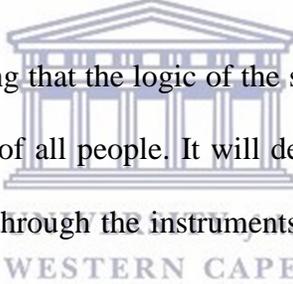
Hence, it is important, for this study, to consider the Marxist conceptualization of the state. In fact, this study understands the state through a critical Marxist lens, whilst considering opposing ideologies around the state; such as liberal and “mainstream” conceptions of the state. In Marx’s *German Ideology*, where it is most likely where Antonio Gramsci derives his conceptions of

hegemony, he unpacks the vastness of the state's impact on social relations. He situates the dominance of the state, as per his class analysis, at the point of production (Marx, 1968). In *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Marx (1945) focuses on the role of the bourgeois state in creating the conditions for capital accumulation. . He argues that the state is a machine that serves to keep the conditions to extract surplus value in place. Moreover, surplus value extraction is done by the capitalist, with the logic to accumulate, and this is extracted from unpaid labour of the worker. This, primarily, is the bedrock upon which the state is set up, this informs its logic and presents the principal contradiction between labour and capital (Marx, 1945).

Furthermore, Marx (1968) unpacks the engineering of state domination, in *The German Ideology*, so impeccably that he identifies the invisible hand of the state, on behalf of the ruling-class, in every set of society's relations. Marx argues that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Marx, 1968: 42). Therefore, he understands the state to be a machine, dictating the direction of society, used to naturalize ideas of the ruling class, for the hegemonic benefit of the class. This take on the state by Marx, is complemented by both Althusserian and Gramscian thought on the state, through the conceptualization of hegemony and the process of coercion (Repressive State Apparatus) and consent (ideological state apparatus). Thus, the fundamental convergence between Gramsci, Althusser and Marx is the state's dominance for and on behalf of the ruling class.

The understandings that the above authors have of the state are significant, and help craft this study's understanding of the state. As such, the study uses Gramscian conceptualization of the state, complemented by Louise Althusser. Gramsci (1971) holds that the state is no neutral machine existing for the interests of all who accept its rule. Rather, he understands the state as a "partisan tool to advance the interest of the elite bourgeoisie" (Gramsci, 1971; 18). Thus, agreeing

with Althusser on how the design of the state is ideally to sustain its dominion through the ideological “war of position” for the interests of a particular group. Gramsci overlaps the shortcomings of Hobbes, whom at one point bases the need for political society on the unpredictability of the state of nature and yet trusts the running of that society on a particular group of people, by pointing out the partial nature under which the state is formed. Moreover, Gramsci also better explains the state by providing an empirical guide to how the state sustains its power; a negotiation between coercion and consent, the war of position, common sense and using the state’s apparatus (as opined by Althusser) to assert its dominion. Therefore, Gramsci will allow for a useful understanding of the state, in order to evaluate the extent of the counter hegemonic quality of the #FeesMustFall movement.



The theory will assist in demonstrating that the logic of the state is to remain hegemonic, for the interest of a particular class, instead of all people. It will demonstrate this by showing how the state asserts itself when challenged, through the instruments of coercion and consent, exercised through the ideological and repressive state apparatus. Unpacking the state means that there needs to be an unpacking of civil society as well.

### **3.3 Civil Society**

The aim of this section is to locate the understanding of #FeesMustFall within the context of civil society as has been earlier identified as a social movement. Specifically, it will be looking at the Gramscian view of civil society and South African civil society.

#### **3.3.1 Gramsci on Civil Society**

It is important to note that Gramsci derives his thought from Karl Marx, although he posits his critique of the bourgeois state in the realm of ideas, to use his words the ‘intellectual struggle’.

Marx informs Gramsci's understanding of the principal contradiction which is between capital and labour, as described above. It is in this context that Gramsci then interrogates how the contradictions are managed by the bourgeois class – and he uses hegemony as an explanation through the employ of coercion and consent. Thus, civil society is the site of his most robust inquiries.

Gramsci (1971) held that it is extremely difficult to understand the state without an understanding of civil society. A definition for civil society is not readily available or isolated in a certain section of the Prison Notebooks. Instead, one can derive or construct a definition based on a complete and interrelated reading of certain passages in the Notebooks. Gramsci views civil society to be all the 'so called' private organizations such as trade unions, churches, political parties, cultural associations which are not involved in processes of production (Gramsci, 1971). For clarification and realignment with the objectives of this study, it is important to understand the differences between all these actors or segments of civil society. The one subject to this investigation being a social movement, which is qualitatively different from all the others mentioned here by Gramsci.

Moreover, Gramsci argues that it is in civil society where there is a build up for ethical and moral society. Furthermore, he argues that since civil society is outside of the market and the state, this is the breeding ground for a battle of hegemony by means of political and ideological struggles (Gramsci, 1971). This understanding by Gramsci lays the foundation of how the relations between civil society and the state can be understood, which allows for this study to better characterize its conception of the role of #FeesMustFall as an organization that is distinct from state and production. This understanding of civil society positions the #FeesMustFall movement as an organization that could well be waging its political and ideological struggle of fee free higher education. It is doing this against a hegemonic idea which is espoused in liberal democracy of

access being open to all instead of granted to all; available to those who can afford it. Therefore, we can use this framing to question whether #FeesMustFall positions itself within civil society with an alternative ideological position. And if it exercises this position to contest an existing hegemonic idea of how higher education should be availed to citizens of South Africa.

### 3.3.2 South African Civil Society

As part of evaluating debates on civil society I have engaged Adam Habib (2005) who has a take on civil society which is explored in this section. Habib defines civil society as “the organized expression of various interests and values operating in the triangular space between the family, state and the market” (Habib et al, 2003: 3). In this definition there is a clear outlining of the three lines of demarcation when it comes to civil society, namely; the family, the state and the market. This creates a clear distinction between the three. Habib’s view of civil society does not vary much from that of Gramsci (1971), in the sense that there is convergence in the understanding of civil society as being distinct from both the market and the state. Habib writes “this definition conceptualizes civil society as an entity distinct from both the market and the state” (Habib, 2005: 4).

However, Habib steers toward a direction that seemingly neglects the influence of the market and the state in civil society. This is informed by the lens through which Habib views the relations between state and civil society; that being a comparative study of the relations during and post-apartheid. He argues that during apartheid there was a “racialized form of adversarial-collaborative dichotomy that typified civil society relations with the state” (Habib, 2005: 12). Indeed, the factor here being that civil society, under apartheid, was racially divided; the government assumed cordial or adversarial relations with civil society on the basis of race. Notwithstanding these

undeniable dynamics, the post-apartheid relation between state and civil society is a much more open one. Informed by South African ideals of non-racialism and nation building, it would be easy to assume collaborative relations between the state and civil society.

Nonetheless, the case that this study investigates shows signs that contest, as do many other studies, the accuracy of this understanding, given its illumination of ideological contradictions between the state and civil society. Hence, it is the interest of this study to further explore state and civil society relations in post-apartheid South Africa by investigating this growing phenomenon of adversarial relations between civil society and the state, even against a backdrop of constitutional democratization. This study looks at the basis laid by Habib, but also extend it to deal with a significantly different period, and political context. For the purposes of this study it is important then to locate where exactly #FMF finds itself in the broader categories of civil society.

Social movements are a part of civil society because they operate outside the terrain of the state. Civil society is a representation of all those organized outside the ambits of the state, representing the varying interests in society. Therefore, #FMF (as earlier identified) is an iteration of an issue based movement formed by a particular group in society that seeks to engage with the state on behalf of this group.

### **3.4 Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony**

This study employs Gramsci's theory of hegemony, supplemented with Althusser's notion of ideological and repressive state apparatus, as a theoretical lens. Antonio Gramsci wrote in a time where his generation was dealing with the fascist regime of Mussolini, which he led a struggle against as a one-time leader of the Italian Communist Party (Simon, 1991). The context within

which he wrote is important, as it contributes to a more comprehensive engagement with his famous prison notebooks.

The prison notebooks by Gramsci provide us with a very scattered, yet historically important anecdote of Gramsci's development of the concept of hegemony and his contribution to Marxist theory. Gramsci dealt primarily with social relations that informed the relations of power, the attaining of that power and how it is wielded and maintained. In the cultivation of his theory of hegemony he had other supplementary conceptions which, when merged, give his whole theorization of the state splendid explanatory power.

#### **3.4.1 Hegemony and Counter – Hegemony**

Gramsci uses hegemony to deal with the complex relations between power and culture. Naturally, being a historical materialist, he is engaged with the multiplicity of social relations and how they can be understood using political theory and within the context of their historicity. A clear definition of hegemony is not immediately extricable from reading the prison notebooks but what has however become popular in academic circles is the following conceptualization: “the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group;” (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci situates civil society, as dealt with in the previous chapter, as a battle field for hegemonic contestation. Gramsci's conceptualization of hegemony is posited on power and culture, how these two come to inform one another. The dynamic flows in this sense; the insurgence of a particular culture by the dominant, the dominance of power to inculcate culture and ultimately the use of culture to maintain that power. The important thing here, though, is where power lies in society and how this power

gets to where it ends up. Gramsci further elaborates on his description of hegemony, “a relation between classes and other social forces” (Simon pg. 22: 2002), the way in which classes engage with social forces and the convergence or divergences that arises as a consequence. He further adds “a hegemonic class, or part of a class, is one which gains the consent of other classes and social forces through creating and manufacturing a system of alliances by means of political and ideological struggle” (Simon, 1991; Pg. 26). After defining what hegemony is, he sets out tools to pragmatically identify a hegemonic class by describing what it does to secure hegemonic status. That being a class must gain the approval and collaboration of other classes as the preferred leader or leaders of a particular ideal or cause.

Ultimately, Gramsci argues that hegemony is gained through consent, using the ability of one class to persuade a range of other classes, intellectually and materially, to consent to it; this argument leading to a particular class gaining status of hegemony through the support of other classes. This theory will assist me in my research in a way that will explain the dynamic in the Fees Must Fall movement which gives it counter-hegemonic character. This counter-hegemonic outlook does not come unchallenged as there is always, at any given time as Gramsci puts it, an existing hegemonic idea. More simply put, the struggle for hegemony in Fees Must Fall is proof of its impact on existing dominant ideas around access to education.

As such, Gramsci’s characterization of hegemony is perhaps better understood when one examines his use of concepts such as coercion and consent, civil society and common sense. He outlines these as practical ways to ensure dominance and the sustainability of ruling class interests (Gramsci, 1971). It is the interest of this study to understand, through this concept, how hegemony plays out in South Africa when there are competing interests in the realm of state and civil society.

Finally, it is to identify moments where #FeesMustFall espouses a desire to change prevailing hegemonic ideas, which will test the study's hypothesis of its counter-hegemonic character.

### 3.4.2 Consent and Coercion

Gramsci uses the notion of coercion and consent as a starting point to outline the concept of hegemony. He writes "Classes exercise power by means of a combination of coercion and persuasion" (Gramsci in Simon; 1991). It is important to note that there is no binary here, no either or, but rather a dialectical relation between the two. The one is used in mediation of the other. He sets out what is done by already established hegemony, they combine, through persuading, people or groups by aligning themselves ideologically or otherwise to them or using some sort of force to maintain this hegemony once gained.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Gramsci's conceptualization of hegemony transcends the existing bounds of hegemony, usually found in the International Relations discipline, which is power of a nation over other nations (Tarrow; 1998). He understands hegemony to be the ability of one class to unite various groups/classes, whether socially related or unrelated, under a certain way of thinking about a particular issue, through gaining their voluntary consent (Gramsci, 1971). Moreover, Gramsci distinguished between coercion (domination) and consent which he coins as "intellectual and moral leadership" (Simon, 1991: 25) or otherwise known as persuasion. He understands coercion to be the use of force or deliberately suppressing certain classes to maintain power over them. A much more direct way of understanding Gramsci's nuanced idea of power relations in society is Althusser's concept of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatus.

### **3.5 The Althusserian Angle**

Making use Althusser's graphic lens when looking at the state's ways with which it sustains its hegemony is helpful to bring the framework of this study together. Althusser (1970), expanding on Gramsci's concept of consent and coercion, identified the tools used by the state in its quest to stay hegemonic. The divide is as follows; the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) and the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs). This divide allows for an easy access into the state's actions, as it points directly to the locations to be investigated. Thus, this is useful in this study as the themes that will emerge in the findings will be analyzed by locating the state's actions within the logic of its two apparatuses.

#### **3.5.1 Althusser: Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) vs. Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA)**

This study, informed by the question to be investigated and my ontological position, takes, from its onset, a historical materialist shape. It starts from the understanding of the state through the Marxist state theory, to a further appreciation of how the state as we know it currently sustains its dominance in society. Louis Althusser is an important thinker to consider because of the way he builds on Gramscian logic and his contribution to a much more accessible understanding of the state. Althusser drew from the conceptions of classic Marxists to further the understanding of the state, with his conception of the ideological and repressive state apparatus. Althusser argues that the state is a repressive organ in itself, completely. However, he notes a difference between ideological state apparatus and repressive state apparatus (Althusser: 1970). He notes that there are institutions that are ideological and there are those that are repressive, but both fall squarely under state apparatus. Before I delve into them qualitatively I will provide a quantitative picture

of them. The list of the ideological reads as follows: the religious, the educational, the family, the legal, the political, the trade union (civil society), the media and the cultural (Althusser, 1970).

The repressive reads as follows: the army, the police, and the courts (Althusser, 1970).

To get into the nuance in differentiation which Althusser alludes to, we must first look at what exactly is being differentiated. Althusser argues that what distinguishes the ISAs from the (Repressive) State Apparatus is the following basic difference: the Repressive State Apparatus functions ‘by violence’, whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses functions ‘by ideology’ (Althusser: 1970). Here he argues that the ideological state apparatus uses the dominance of ideas through various human institutions in society which have the ability to shape one’s outlook of the world. To draw on Gramsci, the ISAs commission the ‘common sense’ of the society which is used in protection of the hegemony of the state, for the purposes of the ruling classes (Gramsci: 1971). He further argues that the ideological and repressive state apparatuses work in sync with each other as the one cannot exist without the other. He writes “There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus” (Althusser: 1970). For instance schools and Churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to ‘discipline’ not only their members, but also their students. The same is true of the Family and other human institutions (Althusser, 1970). Ultimately, it means that even the ideological state apparatuses do encompass in them repressive character; because the nature of the state is violent.

Whilst, on the other hand, the repressive state apparatuses are the more physically repressive arms of the state which are used in mediation of the ideological state apparatus. These are the institutions that play a much more coercive role, in Gramscian terms, in the sense that there is no fight to intellectually gain consent but rather use of force. This is the fact that the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions predominantly by using violence while functioning secondarily by ideology

(Althusser, 1970). He argues that there is no such thing as a purely repressive state. For instance, the Army and the Police also function by using ideology both to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction, and in the attitudes that they exhibit to onlookers (Althusser, 1970).

Ultimately, this much more pragmatic and direct conception of the state's tools to maintain its hegemony, as espoused by Althusser, will give my study the theoretical backing it needs in order to find out how these apparatuses were used, if at all. Firstly, Althusser's conceptualization of these two forms of apparatuses extends the much more theoretical angle given by Gramsci of consent and coercion. The understanding of the ISAs vs RSAs will give me the opportunity to deal with the descriptive while Gramsci's coercion and consent will assist with the more theoretical understanding. Secondly, Althusser's understanding will help the study formulate a framework to answer its question, in this way: are the ideological state apparatuses, such as the media and the law in this case, used to socially engineer a particular attitude towards free tertiary education? If so, how are they used to do this? If they were used, how did #FMF respond to this, if at all? Moreover, if this hegemony was challenged, did the state resort to a more repressive tactic to maintain its hegemony, if so, what was #FMF's response to this? In this way, the study is able to identify markers of evaluating counter hegemony, by looking at the actions and reactions of both the state and #FMF.

### **3.5.2 The Golden Thread**

In answering the questions posed by this study, Althusser and Gramsci's concepts will be central. The study will rely on this framework for the analysis of the findings. The study is to examine whether, if at all, and the extent to which #FMF can be seen as counter-hegemonic. This assessment of counter-hegemony will be made in tension with hegemony – the state. Earlier in the chapter the state was posited as a machine with a monopoly of forces designed for the benefit of a

ruling class (Gramsci, 1971). The framework developed in this chapter has posited the capitalist democratic state, as is in South Africa, as hegemonic. Therefore, the way certain sectors of the South African society's perception of the accessibility to further education is informed by hegemonic ideas purveyed by the state, through its various apparatus and exist in civil society spaces. As such, Chapter six will provide an analysis that will attend to the question of counter-hegemony.

There are a few concessions that are necessary to be made and confronted by this study as it lays out a measure of counter-hegemony. The first is that the #FeesMustFall movement operates within the prescripts of the existing framework of the state, i.e. the university and constitutionalism. This is deduced from analyzing the central demand of the movement, that of Free Education for All, and uncovering its roots in the constitution. The section in the constitution reads "Everyone has got the right to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible" (South African Constitution, 1996: Section 29). To this end, the extent of #FeesMustFall movement's counter-hegemonic quality cannot be assessed using its opposition to the state, but rather using the general way in which civil society and/or agents thereof challenge the state. Hence, it is important to note where the study locates #FMF in order to determine any counter-hegemonic quality. Notwithstanding the fact that the understanding of how further education should be made available differs between #FMF and the state, however there is convergence in where this all emanates from – The Constitution.

Therefore, what #FMF takes issue with is what other civil society organizations take issue with – the efficiency, accountability and delivery of the state. Furthermore, #FMF challenges the accepted attitude, both by government and civil society, of how education should be rationed. The idea that the state can only go so far in making it available is contested by #FMF using the citing of

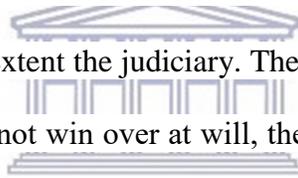
constitutional clauses such as “the government must make progressively available, through reasonable means” (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). Therefore, in evaluating #FMF’s impact one must compare how dissenting agents of civil society generally interact with the state, and what the state’s response generally is. Also, to look for differences in #FMF’s interaction with the state, and as such measuring a difference in the state’s response. As a means of assessment, with the aid of the theory and data, it will assist to ask whether these factors make UWC #FMF counter-hegemonic.

Where the government cannot ideologically convince the students on its position, which is what Gramsci terms ‘the moral and intellectual victory of a class’, it is forced to mediate between ‘**coercion and consent**’ to sustain and defend the common sense idea in relation to further education in South Africa. As Althusser explains, the hegemony of the state is maintained through its apparatuses, which are its institutions. These being **the ideological state apparatus and the repressive state apparatus**. To answer the question, how does the state generally respond to dissent? To what extent were the apparatus heavy-handed in dealing with UWC #FMF? Does this reflect a counter-hegemonic character within #FeesMustFall? To determine this the study will unpack the tools available to the state, which it uses to sustain its legitimacy or assert its dominance.

Firstly, it is useful to recollect that the state, according to Gramsci (1971), can never survive by using either purely coercion or purely consent. Gramsci argues that in order for the state to protect its legitimacy it negotiates itself between these two tools as dictated by the circumstances. The first tool is the ideological state apparatus (consent) which are the institutions used by the state to assert its dominance at the level of ideas (Althusser, 1970). These, namely, are: the media, the judiciary, educational institutions, religious institutions and cultural institutions (Althusser, 1970).

Althusser argues that the state, in the interest of the ruling class, injects its ideas in these institutions as a means of establishing its hegemony and sustaining it. For instance, these tools come into play whenever the state feels that its hegemony is being challenged. The media is used to sustain a particular message, religious organizations gear people to view society in a particular way, cultural institutions also influence a world view. Therefore, these tools must be subject of investigation, in order to find the extent to which the state effected them in response to #FMF. When the state does not find joy in these tools it effects the repressive element. Hence, assessing UWC #FMF's counter hegemony is done in tension with the hegemony of the state. A look at the actions of UWC #FMF and how the state responded is in this case a balanced way of making sense of this.

On the other hand, the repressive tools available to the state are the police, the army, the correctional service and to a certain extent the judiciary. The analogy I have developed whilst on this study goes 'he who the state cannot win over at will, the state will force to change his will'.



At the end of the day the state, in the interest of the ruling class will find ways to protect its hegemony. The framework developed in this study is useful in assessing how and to what extent the state employed its repressive arm when dealing with #FeesMustFall. This will allow for an evaluation of the UWC #FMFs counter-hegemonic quality, if any exists at all. As such, a thorough and well triangulated research process, informed by a carefully considered methodology, will allow this study to have a better exploration of the problem.

## Chapter 4 – Research Design & Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

In this section the research methods, instruments and design that are employed in this study are outlined. Research methodology refers to the techniques and instruments used in collecting data (Bryman, 2001). This study will primarily take a qualitative research approach. It looks at drawing from the lived experiences of the participants in the research and allows for an evaluation of the gradations in the relationship between the theory and the findings.

Various methods of data collection are available to be used in this study. However, the point is to carefully select methods which will bolster and illuminate the full potential of the study; to ensure an outcome that will contribute positively in the body of work. Accordingly, the study makes use of a combination of both primary and secondary data. These include a collection of data from the researcher as a key respondent in the research through the use of auto-ethnography, triangulated by qualitative interviews with other strategic stakeholders within the #FeesMustFall movement at the University of the Western Cape and analysis of media, communication (media statements released in the student protest period) and policy documents and other archival sources to elicit information at various levels on the issues related to the #FeesMustFall movement in 2015. The methods are informed by how the study can approach and investigate a specific phenomenon in a way which preserves the vital data that comes with it, and also observes the highest levels of ethical integrity (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Finally, the study will be using qualitative research tools and auto-ethnography where I, as the researcher, am one of the participants in the movement, which will give my study the richness of data afforded by this instrument. This technique will also be supplemented by others which will be set out in the research design of this study.

## **4.2 Research Design**

The design of this study informed its systematic method of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. Muaz et al defines it as “the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring you will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data.” (Muaz et al 2013). In this section I will map out the design of the study by delving into the data collection tools, sources, methods of triangulation and the qualitative shape of the study.

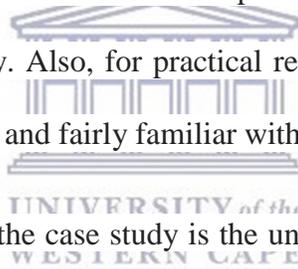
### **4.2.1 Case Study Research**

Yin defines case study research method as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1984: 23). Case studies can be produced by following a formal research method. These case studies are likely to appear in formal research venues, as journals and professional conferences, rather than popular works. The case study research method has held its own as a research technique and as such has been employed in a wide range of disciplines over the centuries.

The case in this study is the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The study will be investigating #FeesMustFall, which was a national phenomenon – but with UWC being the case. The case study research approach will allow me to do an investigation of this phenomenon using one case in order to generate some form of understanding of the #FMF dynamic. Hence, the design of the study is such that it explores the #FMF movement broadly, whilst using UWC as its primary case. The rationale employed for choosing this case is two-fold; the first is the proximity of the

researcher (myself) to the case and secondly the historical character and the unique quality of the UWC chapter of #FMF.

Given the fact that this research uses auto-ethnography as one of its important data collection tools, it is important to consider the proximity of the researcher in the case. The auto-ethnography research technique allows the researcher to be a principal evidence giver in the study, meaning the study takes an anthropological shape (Ellis et al, 2011). A series of other stakeholders and secondary resources are used for triangulation. The researcher was one of the front line leaders of the UWC chapter of #FMF. Thus, primary data is more accessible and there is the latitude for a deeper and nuanced recollection of the events. Of course this is not where the justification for a data collection tool is to take place, but in order to explain the use of proximity as one of the triggers for the case this is necessary. Also, for practical reasons of data collection, the case is UWC where the researcher is located and fairly familiar with the environment.



The second reason for the choice of the case study is the unique quality of the #FMF chapter at UWC. The UWC chapter of #FMF was one of the late bloomers nationally. The movement at UWC started later in October of 2015, around two weeks after institutions like Wits and UCT had been in advanced stages of the protests (Eye Witness News, 2015). The fact that UWC started late did not take anything away from the case, instead it gave the UWC chapter a chance to reflect on the earlier established chapters. Consequentially, the UWC chapter resorted to calling itself “UWC Fees WILL Fall” trying to put more agency to the hashtag by replacing ‘must’ with ‘will’ (UWC Fees WILL Fall Facebook page, 2015). This was cited by one of the media outlets “The protesters, some of whom described themselves as “guerrillas”, have named themselves #UWCFeesWillFall” (Martin and Cronje, 2015). Notwithstanding this information, the reference to the UWC chapter as #FMF throughout the study is because of the national popularity of the hashtag #FMF. Finally,

there are some salient dynamics to be extrapolated from the UWC case and as such it makes sense, with the combination of all factors, to select UWC as a case in this study.

### **4.3 Data Collection & Data Sources**

In this section the tools and sources used for data collection for this study are outlined. It is important to choose the correct tools that will fit the nature and scope of the objectives of my study. It is important to understand what this process entails in order to use it effectively. A definition of it reads as: “Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established systematic fashion, which then enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes” (Weimer, J. (ed.) 1995). The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities and business. It help scientists and analysts to collect the main points as gathered information. Regardless of variations of methods in various disciplines, but the principles of objective and accurate research remains universal. The goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posed. (Weimer, J. (ed.) 1995). The collection of data is done with certain instruments, which I will delve into next.

#### **4.3.1 Auto-ethnography**

Social science research is generally concerned with the lived realities of people, and how to explain social relations in a way that does not come across as abstract or arbitrary (Ellis et al; 2011). Over the years, in the postmodern era, there has been a wave of unorthodox social science research that seeks to put human experiences at the centre of knowledge production. Auto-ethnography is a method that allows this by giving the researcher an opportunity to provide first hand data and analyze it using theory and triangulated with primary and secondary data. Given that auto-

ethnography is one of the study's primary research techniques, it is necessary to posit it correctly within the methods chapter. It is fit then to unpack the reasons for using auto-ethnography as one of the data collecting techniques.

The #FMF movement, informed by historical circumstances, is a new wave in the history of student protests. While recognizing that protest action is not anything new in South Africa – a nation with a complex history of resistance – it is important to note that the wave of #FeesMustFall protests had a unique quality about them. Students have been agitating for free education, registration and adequate housing throughout the post-apartheid era. However, #FMF presented with new variables such as a sustained protest action over two years and an unprecedented ability to galvanize support across various groups in society. Therefore, given how new this movement is it is inevitably under-researched, particularly in a specific way which looks at how the movement unfolded in different campuses across South African universities. Hence, there is little or no literature covering #FMF at UWC, other than popular media articles. It is then upon this backdrop that the decision to use auto-ethnography as a technique is taken – to use the researcher, as a central figure in the movement, to give evidence that is of course triangulated by the experiences of other key stakeholders.

Consequentially, the rationale provided for the employ of this method also serves as a means of locating auto-ethnography within this study. Auto-ethnography is an approach that “challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act” (Ellis et al. 2011: 7). A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write auto-ethnography. In this case, I will be providing the descriptive aspect of the analysis. The position of the researcher being both researcher and respondent will not go without triangulation, as interviews with other stakeholders have been conducted in the process

to collect data in a well-rounded manner. In strengthening the rationale this study evaluates the potential limitations of this method, note them and put measures in place to avoid the integrity of the study being compromised. In order to do this effectively, it is important to introduce and locate the central figure in this research – myself, Lindokuhle Mandyoli.

I am a Master’s candidate in the political studies department at UWC. I am a two time SRC leader and a two time branch executive committee leader of the Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania (PASMA) at UWC; first as its Organizer in 2012 then as its Chairperson in 2014/2015. The UWC chapter of #FMF was sparked by about six activists from PASMA, EFFSC and SASCO – including myself. I had facilitated the first few gatherings of the movement at UWC, in trying to spearhead its shape and form until the students gathered in a mass gathering on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2015 to elect me and Msingati Kula as the two heads of a flexible leadership collective of about eight student activists. My central role was also captured in media reporting, seeking clarity on the motives of the UWC chapter various outlets interviewed me. In attempts to explain the violence that broke out after a disagreement between the student movement and management I was quoted saying “We wanted to mobilize mass action. We went res to res and were blocked by the black ants (security guards)” (Martin and Cronje, 2015).



Figure 4.1: \*The author addressing students at the UWC stadium on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2015\*

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There are notable limitations to this study which are there largely because of its unorthodox nature in as far as conventional research is concerned. It is however not credible enough to write off a method purely because it has risks to it. In this case, I note the risks that can be brought forth by this method and the study has put in place triangulation methods as mentioned above to combat them. Moreover, this method gives the study a cutting edge dynamic, while still contributing to a body of knowledge and delving deeper into the experiential ways of doing research.

This study makes use of auto-ethnography as a research technique in order to provide a descriptive anecdote of key moments that may show signs of counter hegemony at UWC. More definitions of auto-ethnography are: “An approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and

systematically analyses or draw on personal experience, in order to understand cultural experience” (Ellis et al. 2011: pg. 1). This technique entails using observation benefits of being with a group of people or area in order to better understand their ways of being. Auto-ethnography in my case will allow me to use my experience as a student leader in the Fees Must Fall movement, obviously triangulated by placing it within a theory and interviewing other students in the movement, to better understand the problem proffered by this study.

Moreover, Ellis et al. (2011) also writes that auto-ethnography combines characteristics of autobiography, which is telling a story of oneself or someone lived with, and ethnography, which is researching by physically being there and observing. This could be understood as telling a story, but an objective story guided by ethical research conduct and academic integrity considerations using research tools such as theory, literature and broader perspectives. More importantly, this technique is just one of a few other techniques that will be employed in this study. It does not represent the foundation of the research methods of the study, but constitutes a significant part of the whole method of inquiry.

### **4.3.2 Interviews**

Interviews are a method used in research which enables participants to describe their experiences, in order to be used for data purposes. Interviewing is a theoretical approach to data collection, an engaging form of inquiry, and an appropriate method for collecting data regarding human experiences (Kaufman, 1992; Kvale, 1996). According to Reinhartz (1992), interviewing offers researchers access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words, rather than the

words of the researcher. The researcher explores a few general topics to assist in uncovering the participant's perspectives, but demonstrates the utmost respect for how the participant frames and structures the responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This study has used interviews as one of the primary instruments of data collection. The 14 respondents that were interviewed are key informants i.e. five student leaders from various student formations; three random students who were selected through social media sampling, four mid-level University administrators and two academic experts in issues of higher education and student politics in Africa.

Interviews have been an important technique in getting useful data to answer the question of this study. The nature of interviews are very qualitative, and as such have allowed for in-depth data collection which has presented some rich data. Moreover, it was also important to use this technique due to the nature of the case and the dynamic of the researcher as a principal evidence giver – to triangulate effectively.



### **4.3.3 Triangulation**

Informed by the nature of the research methods employed by this study i.e. autoethnography, it is important to employ a rigorous triangulation process – albeit necessary in all forms of research. Hence, the reason for choosing these participants (as mentioned in the section just above this) is to get an in depth understanding of their experience in/about the movement at UWC, and also to avoid having my bias stand out as an uncontested view point.

### **Sampling Method**

This section outlines the sampling method that has been employed in selecting the respondents. It provides the rationale for and reasoning behind the various respondents and how they have been selected.

Student respondents: The five students have been selected by setting up interviews with leaders of ALUTA, the Democratic Alliance Student Organization (DASO), the Economic Freedom Fighters Student Command (EFFSC), the South African Students' Congress (SASCO), the Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania (PASMA), the Students' Representative Council and one non-partisan student very actively involved in the #FMF movement. Moreover, three more students have been interviewed who were selected using social media sampling – through a Facebook and Twitter monitoring process to identify students active but not directly or evidently present in the movement. The researcher tracked the responses of dissenting students throughout the 2015 instalment of #FMF – all Facebook comments and responses to the UWC Fees Will Fall pages for twitter. This was done to track consistent students who engaged and from such a process they were sampled. Moreover, students were individually contacted by way of direct messages, on Twitter, and inbox messages, on Facebook. A range of eight students were identified and contacted, with only three interviews materializing. The researcher was the administrator of all social media platforms of the UWC #FMF chapter, which made it possible to access the pages, identify the active users across all social media platforms and track their interaction using the two sites' sophisticated ways of measuring interaction on one's social media account, i.e. tracking likes, engagements, comments and profile views.

The four university administrators are selected to represent a view of stakeholders other than students at UWC. The four respondents were selected based on the frequent contact they would have with students as a result of their positionality in the university governance systems. Student governance manager, faculty manager, academic interested in higher education, all these are key

people who would be able to provide an angle that perhaps students did not see or did not want to see, for tactical reasons or otherwise.

#### **4.4 Desktop Study**

Desktop research is basically involved in collecting data from existing sources so it is often considered a cheaper way of conducting research as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in the researcher's time, telephone charges and directories.

Desktop research is very effective and can be conducted in starting phase of research as it is quite quick and cheap and most of the basic information could be easily fetched which can be used as benchmark in the research process. This technique will make it easier for me to establish and bolster the theoretical framework of my research. I will use it to find literature and tease out the arguments that spoke to my study, which gave a theoretical base for it. The desktop approach is time-saving and also allows for one to engage quite a vast area of data at the same time. My data came from the conceptual analysis of key theories which laid the foundation for how I am going to ask the questions in order to ensure my study reaches its maximum potential.

Primary data was collected such as media statements, manifestoes, and newspaper articles in order to aid my analysis of the processes inside the movement and how they were perceived internally. More generally, secondary data will allow me to gain certain facts around the issues which will fortify the objectivity of my study.

#### **4.4 Data Analysis**

The intention of my study is to understand how this movement plays out a problematic relation between party politics and student politics. Hence, I will analyse the data derived from interviews,

speeches, newspaper articles and media statements to get a sense of the overall factors that can be evidence of the existence of the problem, and then uses the data to cultivate an answer.

#### **4.5 Limitations**

A limitation of a study design or instrument is a systemic bias which a researcher has not or could not deal with which could inappropriately affect the results of the study. However, there is also delimitation, where the researcher chooses deliberately to narrow a research to a specific group or phenomena (Price & Murnan: 2013). In this study, like any other, there are a few limitations that have come with the methodology and the positioning of the researcher. Nonetheless, these limitations do not make for a debunking of the validity of the study, but rather to acknowledge them puts one in the best position to deal with the limitations.

As stated in the research design, the study uses auto-ethnography as a key technique in the research. Therefore, it relies partly on an anecdotal account from myself about the chosen moments of significance which my study seeks to probe. This provides a bias that stands out in my technique.

A limitation could be that the study will be faced with various objectivity critiques before really delving into the richness that it could provide due to its unique approach. However, the processes of triangulation have been outlined in that said section earlier in this chapter, and the researcher has been introduced in order to guide and give context to the audience of this study.

It is then upon me to ensure that it is clear from the onset the shape and form that this study is taking and to acknowledge certain limitations that come with it. More importantly, my thorough understanding of this approach has led me to a quest of finding ways to triangulate my experience as evidence with that of others and primary data which is readily available through media

statements, speeches and minutes of meetings. Moreover, it is important to note the challenges and limitations encountered in the field work process.

#### **4.5.1 Access to Desired Respondents**

As outlined in the sampling section of this chapter, the research had set out to interview student leaders, ordinary students, university administrators and Members of Parliament (MPs) serving in the portfolio committee of higher education and/or MPs representing the parties that are associated with the political student formations within #FMF.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond my control, the members of the portfolio committee, after numerous attempts to meet with them, were not available. This is acknowledged as a limitation because getting the view of the portfolio committee members would give the study insight on the debates at the legislative arm of the state. Moreover, the interest would be to trace the discourse in the committee to before #FMF broke out and assess it after the break out. This would have assisted with understanding the influence of #FMF on the committee, the nature of its deliberations and its decisions to date.

Also, it is acknowledged that after communication with and securing commitments to interviews from both the Vice Chancellor and the Executive Director of Finance at UWC, both participants did not, for reasons of availability I assume, did not end up honouring the interview requests. The correspondence with the said participants was made, unfortunately the interviews did not take place. The contributions of these two participants would have made the study stronger as they are at the helm of the university's direction at UWC. Moreover, with recollection of engagements, one could tell that they were at odds with the students' demands at a strategic, but perhaps not

principle level. Hence, their insights would have made clearer the whole idea of hegemonic notions within higher education.

Notwithstanding these concessions of a limitation, the reporting and media statements relating to the portfolio committee of higher education have filled this data void that would be created by the inability to access the members of the committee. Therefore, the limitation is acknowledged and addressed accordingly. The limitations of the unavailability of the Vice Chancellor and executive director of finance is one that has not been adequately addressed as one cannot substitute these stakeholders, however, reference to university statements – particularly that of the Vice Chancellor, and messages to the campus community was used to trace the views of the two stakeholders, albeit admittedly inadequate, the attempts aided in some way.

#### **4.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics for academic research has become extremely important in the quest of defending the integrity of knowledge production and emerging scholarship.

This study is a qualitative study and will be involving people in the process of research, so it becomes important to deal with issues of research ethics. There is a research ethics policy at the University of the Western Cape which will be followed to the letter, by ensuring that there are consent forms provided to participants. The conditions of the research are explained thoroughly to each participant throughout the process. The form covers the following:

- Informed consent where participants agree explicitly to participate and know that they can leave any time.
- Anonymity – protect identities where requested

- Confidentiality – protect potentially harmful information for all respondents, including those who do not choose to be anonymous
- There were information sheets and consent forms for:

#### (I) Interviews

In order for any study to contribute to an existing body of knowledge it must have gone through an ethical process from proposing the study to presenting its findings. Here I attended to the ethical considerations this study needs to adhere to by looking at ways of reducing bias to protect the integrity of the findings.

Research ethics can be understood as “specifically interested in the analysis of ethical issues that are raised when people are involved as participants in research” (Walton, 2008: 13). In this study I will be looking at the reactions of people to certain decisions made by the state, by University managers and by students in the movement. Therefore, there was an informed consent form from the department of Political Studies at UWC which shows that the interviews and the research process have been sanctioned. Coupled with this form, the respondents’ confidentiality will be guaranteed at all times throughout the study, unless the respondent expresses clearly the interest to be mentioned.

Miller, Birch, Mauthner and Jessop (2012) have an important take on ethics in relation to qualitative research. As a group of feminist researchers, they concede that their encounters with lives, livelihoods and persons has exposed the, at times, rigid and as such ethically restricting guidelines at present (Miller et al, 2012). Hence, they argue for a much more situational, contextual

and practice based approach to research. This means that being able to adhere to the ethical guidelines not only to the letter of the rules, but to allow for flexibility to be more ethical as determined by various situations.

This brief literature on research ethics informs the research process of this study. Participants will not be taken to places they do not want to go, to satisfy a desired veracity of the data. It is the foremost interest of this study to use the data that participants are most comfortable sharing, and to make the environment as ethically compliant as possible.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

The research methodology chapter has outlined the practical research process, specific techniques, the rationale for choosing instruments and ethical considerations for the study. In this section I will bring the work of the chapter all together in conclusion.

First the Chapter set out to identify the design of the study. The chosen research design made it easy to carry out the research in a way that has reaped positive results. The study undertook case study research as a method, in order to understand the #FeesMustFall movement within a particular context. Also, the case study method is practical as it would not be plausible to investigate #FMF in all institutions where it took place, at least not at Master's level.

The chapter moved then to identify a process for data collection that would be useful and most accessible for the study. Further, the chapter looked at auto ethnography as a technique, introduced it and explained why it is suitable for this study. Moreover, the use of interviews with other stakeholders, media reports and speeches was outlined as well. Furthermore, the triangulation of the data was explained and the chapter also dealt with ethical considerations and the limitations that the study faced, and how they were addressed. Finally, a carefully considered methodology

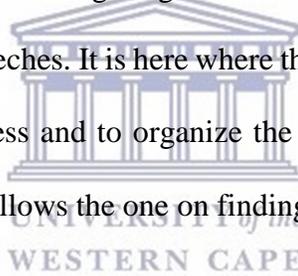
was developed in order to ensure a fair exploration of the problem. The results of the research process are, as such, dealt with in the next chapter.



## Chapter 5 – A Closer Look at UWC #FMF

### 5.1 Introduction

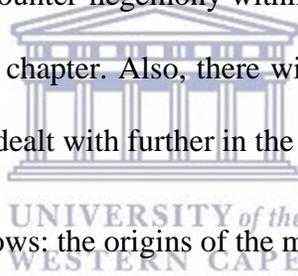
This chapter will deal with the findings that have emanated from this research. The chapter will contain a descriptive presentation of the data. The reasons for this strategy is informed by the specific periods which the study used in the whole process of research. The study will be looking at the period between the years 2015-2016 generally, and October 2015 – December 2015 specifically. The data overlaps the said time frame in a few occasions, and this will be noted as and when the need arises to guide the reader. Moreover, in this descriptive section of the chapter the researcher (myself) will be central and my views will be triangulated with data from the interview process. Finally, the chapter brings together all the data from 14 interviews, media statements, YouTube videos, and speeches. It is here where the data is carefully presented to show the picture of the UWC #FMF process and to organize the data in a way that makes it easy to analyse in the analysis chapter that follows the one on findings.



In this chapter I will write in first person and draw on my recollection of events in order to describe and narrate some major activities/moments within the UWC #FMF Chapter. As stated in Chapter 4 (Research Methods and Design), this technique is informed by the lack of research done on the UWC experience, and the richness that can come from the data drawn from my personal experience. However, all such recollections I might have will be triangulated with the data set mentioned in the beginning of this section. I believe that my view of the processes of UWC #FMF are a perspective of the whole, but with the inclusion of other participants both directly and indirectly affected it transforms to a more comprehensive view. As such, the view of others without mine would lack something, hence the chose to examine my own involvement and experiences as well.

Moreover, in this part the study outlines the more descriptive elements of the findings first, but resists the temptation of prematurely delving into analysis of the data. The aim of the chapter is primarily to present the findings, as such the more comprehensive engagement with the findings will be found in the analysis section in this chapter.

The evidence will be presented in a two-fold manner, the first will be a process that emulates story telling in that it will delve deep into the unfolding narrative of UWC #FMF. This description is useful to understand the inner workings of UWC #FMF and will allow for seamless and systemic analysis. Then the chapter deals with a series of key moments during the 2015 protests at UWC because of the significance of the moments in the make-up of #FMF at UWC. The moments are also key to evaluating the extent of counter-hegemony within the UWC #FMF Chapter, and will be drawn on throughout the analysis chapter. Also, there will be a noting of key topics that are recurrent within the data that will be dealt with further in the analysis.



The chapter will be organized as follows: the origins of the movement, a description and detail of the UWC #FMF chapter, the road to a common goal, a moment of chaos at Robert Sobukwe Road, on route to the Cape Town International Airport, and the fateful 11<sup>th</sup> of November in 2015. All these moments are chronological, and help tell the story of UWC #FMF as reflected by the data. The selection of these moments is informed by the distilling of the character and process of UWC #FMF.

### **5.2.1 Origins of the Movement**

The student movement is characterized by a historical evolution of struggle, it draws its language, patterns of protests and even songs from the liberation movement of South Africa. It is notable that within the DNA of the student movement is the legacy of the fight against colonialism and

apartheid. This is evidenced by the patterns of sloganeering, and even the organization of student political formation according to party lines. Hodes (2017) reinforces this view by writing that “the mass mobilization of #FMF was partly enabled by past protest action and its self-definition as something novel” (Hodes, 2017: 144). The deduction from Hodes’ view is that #FMF established itself on the backs of widespread protest culture in South Africa, but also distinguished itself as a protest of much greater significance. Notwithstanding the fact that #FMF occurs at a time where protests are widespread, and seemingly the most popular way of marginalized groups to engage the state, #FMF takes a very unique shape. The movement organizes across racial, class and cultural divides. The uniqueness, however, is also a product of a particular history.

When interviewing Dr. Leuscher he presented a useful historical analysis of student politics in South Africa. He says “when it comes to #FMF what one usually forgets when it comes to the understanding student politics, is that student politics has a history. But because student leaderships in the SRC has got such short terms ...there is usually a problem with institutional memory” (Interview with Dr. Luescher, 2018). He argues that this results into a restricted reading of student politics and their general evolution in South Africa. He further unpacks the character of student movements that are informed by the environment. He explains why students’ organization is always geared in protests and attributes it to their position in society. He says because students cannot change things on their own, they always need to lobby either university management or the national department of higher education and training, in order to influence policy. He draws all this to the need for students to go public in order to bargain effectively. He surmises it quite aptly when he says “student activism is a public engagement with issues around policy and social conditions more generally in a country or particular location” (Interview with Dr. Leuscher, 2018). Ultimately, he traces student protests and activism from far back in apartheid and post-apartheid

regimes where students were in constant contestation with the effects of a neo-liberal policies on the rationing of higher education in South Africa.

When conducting an interview with Dr. Leuscher, who is an authority on student politics scholarship in SA and the director of higher education research at the HSRC, gives quite a fitting analogy to understand #FMM within an unfolding history, he says “the wave (#FMM) is new and exciting, but the sea has always been there” (Interview with Dr. Leuscher, 2018). Moreover, Dr. Leuscher mentions that there are very clear patterns of protests in historically black institutions like Tshwane University of Technology, CPUT and UWC. He cites this to move away from the idea that #FMM presents a completely new dynamic altogether.

Whilst, Prof. Africa on the other hand felt that the #FMM movement challenged the general perceptions on access to higher education and this included her own. Professor Africa is an associate professor in the department of political studies at UWC who has contributed to recent scholarship on decolonization (see: Africa & Mutizwa-Mangiza, 2018), elections and party politics in South Africa. Prof. Africa, who is also the current spokesperson of UWC, acknowledges that her involvement was fairly limited within the movement, other than observing and attending a few meetings as an academic and in solidarity with the movement. However, she notes that over a period post-#FMM her view has been broadened around the extent of the challenges faced by students. This, she also acknowledges is due to the public nature of #FMM and how it permeated social discourse within that period (Interview with Prof. Africa, 2018).

Moreover, Mr. Simpson, manager of the Community and Health Sciences Faculty at UWC who followed the UWC #FMM movement quite keenly, drives home the point that #FMM was a necessity to bring the powers that be, nationally, to a realization of a gap in development in society.

Mr. Simpson, who is a seasoned anti-apartheid activist of the United Democratic Front, believes that things like #FMF were an inevitable occurrence for as long as the democracy did not translate into the material improvements of the people. He draws on the promises in the Freedom Charter that opine that the doors of learning shall be open for all. This informs his engagement with the discourse presented by #FMF. While Mr. Mdepa, the manager of Student Governance and two time former SRC President at UWC, in agreement with Mr. Simpson on the need for free education, adds that the students are purely responding to a commitment made to them 23 years ago. What comes out glaringly is the sense of reconnection with the ideals of a democratic South Africa. Mr. Mdepa, although he disagrees with the violence and certain modalities of #FMF, cannot seem to divorce himself from the feeling of hope inspired by the constitution. Mr. Mdepa is a student affairs practitioner who works with students directly, and laments on how the lack of funding has dampened the hopes of many young people. This history laid a foundation for the conditions of a new movement to come to life. It is therefore within this context, provided by the respondents above that #FMF emerges, nationally and at UWC.

### **5.2.2 The UWC Chapter of #FMF**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October the students at the Witwatersrand University, following a mass meeting the previous day at the Solomon Mahlangu house, set out to shut down university processes in protest of proposed fee hikes (Sello, 2015). Sello describes the Solomon Mahlangu house, the place the students used to gather throughout the protests, as a fortress of student energy (Sello, 2015). Students had gained so much momentum that the demands were definitive with little latitude for compromise. He writes that “when Council members arrived for the 7pm meeting, students made it clear the only solution they were willing to accept was a no fee increase agreement.” (Sello,

2015). This language of no compromise was a language that reverberated across all campuses, including the University of the Western Cape.

This section will give a description of the history and development of the #FMF movement at UWC as presented by the data set. After the consultation of primary and secondary data, this section will present these in tracing the establishment of the UWC chapter of #FMF.

According to my own recollection, it was on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October that the University of the Western Cape students decided to call a mass meeting of students. This came after a series of criticisms levelled against known activists at UWC for ‘staying silent’ while other universities had heeded the clarion call for fees to fall. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of October UWC joined the rest of the country’s Universities by meeting at the student centre to craft a way forward. The UWC chapter used a number of campus-based issues to agitate students, calling for “SCM (Student Credit Management) to fall” and the institutionalization of Kovacs, a private residence on UWC land (UWC Fees Must Fall Facebook Page, 2015). This strategy seemed to work as they managed to gather just over a few hundred students in the first attempt. Before the findings delve deeper into the movement, it is important for it to understand the UWC #FMF chapter to have a better grasp of what informed the choices made, and strategies employed.

The current generation of students at UWC, and the issues that they face might be different from the generation and issues of the years immediately post-apartheid. However, there are systemic issues that have prevailed from the late 1990’s and still envelope modern day UWC. One such example is the 1998 crisis at UWC that saw almost 7000 students excluded due to the implementation of the cost sharing model (Leuscher, Barnes and Cele, 2016). Cele (2015) analyses this crisis moment both historically and with the intentions to critique the funding models of the

said period. He argues that this shift in the funding model galvanized a particular agency from the UWC students. Naturally, the environment was extremely political at the time, but activism took a knock during that period due to the pacification that came with the expectations from a democratic government (Cele, 2015). The students had both individual and collective responses to the threat of about 7000 students being financially excluded. The 1998 conflict, for Cele, was the most important moment for student activism at UWC for the next ten years or so. The conflict was the subject of protracted negotiations between the UWC SRC and Management. The spill over prompted a need to garner external support through lobbying and engagement of internal and external stakeholders. The SRC and its student body saw it fit to go outside the university “where they engaged and lobbied the ceremonial Chancellor Archbishop Desmond Tutu, officials of the national department of Education and the ANC headquarters, all organizations of the Mass Democratic Movement including the trade union federation and ANC Youth League” (Leuscher and Cele, 2016: 186). After two weeks of protest and engagement a compromise was reached and an agreement that alleviated the pressure off the students was reached. The agreement included students having to pay 30% of their debt upfront, however, there was latitude to deal with the students on a case by case basis. This meant there was an avoidance of a blanket exclusion of students.

The 1998 conflict seems to have similar factors in UWC in the contemporary era. For instance, the Student Credit Management (SCM)<sup>1</sup> at UWC has since been dealing with students on a case by

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<sup>1</sup> The Student Credit Management office is an office in charge of tracking student debt, and managing the university’s debt recovery process. It is inevitably seen as the number one enemy of students, as access is mostly denied due to financial reasons, managed by SCM. The SCM extreme case system follows this pattern: Student X owes fees, SCM demands 30% of owed amount plus upfront registration. If one cannot meet this requirement, it advises the student go work to pay off debt. SRCs are usually opposed to this, and as such the SCM committee – which acts as an appeals board – came to life. The committee heeds the student’s case and makes a decision on the students’ future based on that.

case basis, and characterizing them in three ways; academically poor, no funding and extreme cases (which mostly meant both of the first two categories combine). Moreover, the model of upfront payments remain. The debt collection and negotiating instrument of the university has always been SCM. As such, in 2015, in the #FMF era, the minimum payments to service historical debt and upfront payments before being allowed to register remain an obstacle for students and often result in financial exclusion. So the UWC #FMF chapter is informed by a history of financial woes that are informed by the socio economic conditions of the students, the precarious financial position of the university and dropping rate in subsidies from the Department of Higher Education and Training. In 2015 all these issues are present to be used by those who initiate #FMF at UWC, complemented by a national momentum on the demand for free education. The calls for the Student Credit Management (SCM) to fall and the institutionalization of a private residence named Kovacs were top of the agenda for the UWC Chapter. The movement was made up of DASO, PASMA, SASCO, ALUTA, Student Christian Organization (SCO) and various developmental structures on the UWC campus.



# #UWCFeesWILLFall Movement

ALL UWC STUDENTS ARE  
INVITED TO A MASS MEETING

SCHEDULED AS FOLLOWS:

**DATE: 21 OCTOBER 2015 (WEDNESDAY)**

**TIME: 13H00**

**VENUE: STUDENT CENTRE (GRASS  
AREA)**

## AGENDA:

**#FeesMustFall**

**#ZeroIncrement**

**#InstitutionalizeKovacs**

**#SCMMustFall**

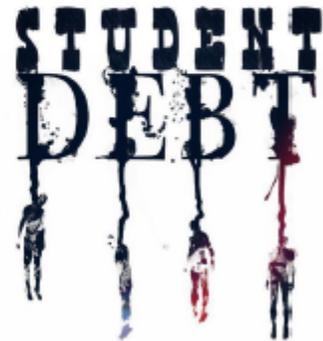


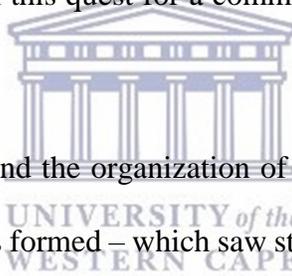
Figure 5.1: UWC #FMF Poster

The difficult task still awaited them though; the conceptualization of their demands and political position going forward. The coming together of various student formations, both political and religious, meant that there would need to be a language that cuts across that divide and unites the movement. There has historically always been a gap between political, religious and developmental structures on the UWC campus. The political structures receiving a larger portion of the budget, which always caused a rift among student formations. As such, the coming together

of the organized student formations, against such a history, was tricky. The road to challenging the biggest potential to divide the movement was to be a difficult, but unavoidable one. This process presented the UWC branch with its first daunting challenge.

### **5.2.3 The Road to a Common Goal**

The challenge of crafting an identity that would resonate with all the students within the movement was not to be taken lightly. If one just looks at the images of #FMF at gatherings and protests there is a variety in political regalia, it depicts a picture of how complicated the road to a common goal could be if not handled strategically. It is upon this background that the task ahead would be a forging of unity in a space with varying political, social and electoral interests. In this section we take a look at the difficulties faced in this quest for a common ideological identity for the UWC #FMF chapter.



The national trend on campuses around the organization of #FMF was that there was a broadly inclusive leadership structure that was formed – which saw student leaders from different political organizations, and even religious structures take the lead. For instance, at Wits Shaeera Kalla, Mcebo Dlamini and Vuyani Pambo from the ANC Youth League and EFF students command respectively, shared a platform in every gathering. At UWC it was myself from PASMA, Mangaliso Nompula from ALUTA, Msingati Kula from SASCO, Katlego Mojaki from EFFsc, and Abongile Mjokozeli from DASO. The platform in most, if not all, campuses included the SRC and usually prominent student activists in the beginning. However, it is important to note the positionality of the SRC within the movement itself. At Wits, UCT and Rhodes, for instance, the SRCs there were a part of #FMF instead of leading #FMF (Interview with Mangaliso Nompula, 2018). New and emerging activists found their way into the leadership of #FMF, whilst student political formations had also to contend with each other in the leadership structure. Nonetheless,

given the historical nature of student activism and how the student movement has challenged the University in the past, this sharing of a terrain was not unique – particularly when the goal is clearly identified and common. This shows how student political formations have challenged the government and universities before, but even Leuscher (Interview, 2018) agrees that this time around it was something with a different quality. Going back to the original point about the SRC, the difficulty for the SRC at UWC would be to succumb to being ‘part of’ instead of exclusively ‘leading’ the #FMF movement. In an interview with Unati Sigodi, he reveals a lot about the thinking of the UWC SRC at the time. Sigodi is a 32 year old social work Masters student. He grew up in the poverty stricken former Transkei, Utsolo, where he would – according to him – find his activist inspiration. He has led the SASCO branch of UWC as both its treasurer and the chairperson. Mr. Sigodi is also the current Provincial treasurer for the Young Communist League (YCL) and was the UWC Branch leader of the YCL in 2015. Growing up in the socio economic conditions of rural South Africa, like he did, made him aware of the struggles of black people, thus he saw being a student leader as his vehicle to make his contribution to society.

Speaking to the SRC Secretary (Sigodi) about what kind of debates ensued within the SRC during that contentious time of UWC #FMF he said:

*“Well, look, uhm, it was clear that we did not believe that our opposition had gotten over the election result that saw us (SASCO) win 100% at the elections. So we believed this was a back door entrance into student office by disgruntled PASMA and EFF leaders”*  
*(Interview with Unati Sigodi, 2018).*

The election results of the year 2015 are very important in this case. The SRC elections of UWC were concluded about a week and a half before UWC #FMF came into being. I was the deputy

president in the outgoing SRC, and as a member of PASMA served in a SASCO led SRC. The election result was disputed by PASMA, DASO and the EFFsc – albeit to no success. PASMA made the case that the students had shown general faith in PASMA through attending its manifesto launches and campaign activities in visibly greater numbers. The contestation of the election outcome was informed by the disillusionment of PASMA supporters, and discrepancies cited by their election agents in the process of counting. Again, these efforts fell flat on the ground. Now given this context, it was the firm belief of the UWC SRC that the #FMF movement was another attempt at high jacking power having ‘failed’ to do so at the polls. Therefore, the UWC SRC had problems trusting the sincerity of this attempt to have an organic student movement for all that is not led in traditional ways by the SRC. The distrust was informed by a political rationale and protectionist tendency which can be understood, and polarized even further by the fact that I came through as a representative of UWC #FMF to negotiate a union between the SRC and UWC #FMF. My intentions, which I assume were understood as the intentions of UWC #FMF, were seen to get back into the SRC through delegitimizing the then elected SRC. This contradiction was a reality, but the UWC #FMF leadership could not move past the fact that the SRC was in a bureaucratic trap and would drag the #FMF agenda down if allowed to lead the demands.

Hence, the SRC at UWC distanced itself from the UWC #FMF movement, citing concerns of violence and vandalism. In an update to the campus community, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2015, the Rector quoted a letter sent to him by the SRC speaking on this, “SRC distances itself from any acts of violence and/or vandalism (as seen through the spray painting of university buildings)<sup>2</sup>” (Message to Campus Community from UWC Rector, 2015). This provoked a harsh reaction from

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<sup>2</sup> The day before the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of UWC #FMF there were a few buildings spray painted across the UWC campus. The paintings included phrases like “decolonize UWC”; “SCM Must Fall” and “No to Fee Increment”. These were linked to the UWC #FMF movement as it was seen as one of its strategies.

the UWC #FeesMustFall, denouncing the SRC as sellouts of the student revolution. The interesting thing to note is that SASCO, the student organization in student government at UWC at the time, is an ANC aligned student formation. This is significant because there seemed to be an interest at Luthuli House to have the ANC student arm at the forefront of the protest in order to control its outcomes. I concede though, that the findings are not clear in this regard. However, the initial divisions were not enough to completely destabilize the movement – but they presented an interesting dynamic around the role of the state, through the government, in trying to deal with the #FeesMustFall movement. This is because the divisions were premised on party political divides within the movement, but they did not last long as the overwhelming sense of unity in the movement prevailed. To assess this dynamic even closer, I interviewed the then SRC Secretary General who was also the Chairperson of SASCO at the time.



When further probing Mr. Sigodi on the position of the SRC he mentioned that the question was largely on strategy and in defense of SRC legitimacy. Moreover, he recalls that “we were not all in agreement on how to intervene as an SRC, but intervene – we all agreed, we must” (Interview with Unati Sigodi, February 2018). The SRC had to consider the fact that the UWC #FMF movement had begun to position itself as the foremost representative of student interests – albeit outside the governance systems of the university – with overwhelming popular support from certain groups of students within the campus. Ndwandwa (Interview 2018) urged the UWC SRC “to join the moving train” time and again, referring to the momentum UWC #FMF was gathering. So the conundrum for the SRC was whether to accept this and be absorbed into the architecture of #FMF or to resist this in defense of its position as the leader of students, while risking rejection (Interview with Unati Sigodi, February 2018). This is because of the SRC’s earlier distancing from UWC #FMF which meant that the SRC had lost a fair amount of the students’ trust. So for it to go

and support UWC #FMF would not be enough, it would need to prove its loyalty and this would mean being relegated to followers of the organic flat structure of the UWC #FMF leadership.

As a result of the SRC's initial distancing from the #FMF movement, the tensions in the UWC #FMF movement heightened particularly the feelings of the students towards the SRC. In probing this further, the study increasingly became interested in the internal dynamic in the #FMF movement, so I interviewed one of its leaders in the forefront; Mangaliso Nompula. Mr. Nompula was the chairperson of ALUTA and was seen as one of the revered leaders in the UWC #FMF chapter. Mr. Nompula stood out as one of the leading minds in the movement, and as a result had the confidence of students to lead the protests and discussions, amongst a few other leaders. Mr. Nompula notes that the leaders of UWC #FMF were faced with a difficulty because they were insistent on including the SRC in the leading structure of the movement, but the students had lost trust in the SRC. He points out the contradictions quite glaringly as he says "they (UWC SRC) had given into the mandate of the ruling party (ANC) to either gain control or discredit the movement" (Interview with Mangaliso Nompula, March 2018). I believe that the UWC SRC was very conflicted in the sense that its national student body SASCO had called for a halt on protests nationally. SASCO at UWC had to contend with this, and the seemingly popularity of UWC #FMF on the ground. Hence, their language started to be expressly vague, by this I mean the ambiguity was so glaring one could see it was intentional. I could appreciate SASCO's difficult position at the time, but also insisted they chose between student interests and their political home. I had not been able to reconcile how they would choose a party line over the interests of students they had sworn to defend. Hence I came to the conclusion, which I communicated in every meeting I chaired afterwards, that if SASCO wants to appease the ANC at the students' expense, then they must not be given any space in the movement. With this, we also allowed any individual SASCO member

to participate in the movement, as we felt the decision contradicted some of the values of individual SASCO activists on UWC campus.

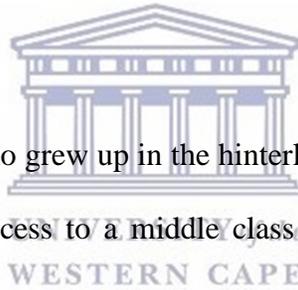
Moreover, the media played a critical role at this stage of the movement's development, with perception being a big part of the student movement's strategy. The speculations on whether the divisions would spell the end of #FMF at UWC or propel them to greater unity were all playing out in mainstream and social media. Philasande Manyala, a leading activist on the UWC campus, mentions how it was an important and deliberate instruction by the leadership to the movement to defend the gains of the movement on social media. The use of Twitter and Facebook were particularly encouraged to curb any negative perceptions that would emanate. Mr. Manyala (Interview 2018) says "we used it as a rehabilitation centre whenever our public support took a knock". The role of the media, however, will be dealt with in more detail in the analysis chapter. Moreover, now that the quest for a common identity within UWC #FMF has been unpacked it is important to look much closer at the UWC #FMF movement and note the specific moments within which the UWC #FMF movement found strength and unity to confront the challenges levelled against it by the university (through private paramilitary security) and the state (through specialized Public Order Policing).

#### **5.2.4 Chaos at Robert Sobukwe Road**

The UWC #FMF, as outlined in the section above, has a distinct quality about it, informed by its campus dynamics and history. However, it is also informed and influenced by the national shape and form that it takes across all other universities. Consistent with the national pattern, the UWC #FMF chapter took its battle outside the borders of the university gates in attempts to attain popular support and put pressure on the state. In this section the very first case of UWC #FMF exiting its

gates to extend its call and pressure is explored. The views of the leaders, ordinary students and university administrators are examined to understand the moment in more detail.

According to a 23 year old final year law student, Miss Zamantungwa Khumalo, who claims she would not ‘typically’ be found at the picket line, it was on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October that she decided to join and support this movement. In what seemed like daily messages to the campus community during the period of heightened protest, the Rector reported the incident of students taking their protest outside the campus premises. The message read “At about 17:30 yesterday evening, a group of students took the protest off campus, blocking the major intersection between Robert Sobukwe Road and Symphony Way” (Message to Campus Community – UWC Rector, 2015). This proved to be a watershed moment for some students who had remained on the sidelines; Miss Khumalo was one of them.



Miss Khumalo is a young woman who grew up in the hinterlands of KwaZulu Natal. Her mother is a teacher who has always had access to a middle class life, and thus she has never really experienced the hardship she would vicariously confront through her peers at University. She says:

“At first, I really didn’t understand what was going on and why students were so angry. But with time and as students articulated what it is they were fighting for it resonated so deep with me” (Interview with Zamantungwa Khumalo, 2018)

The event that would shape her #FMF pilgrimage would be the gathering of UWC students, in their numbers, at the busiest intersection of the Robert Sobukwe Road. She describes how she observed, as an onlooker on the periphery of what seemed like a moment in a movie, the students sitting down posing no threat to the police. What followed this ‘disciplined act’ from students would shock and anger her. The moment is taken from the statement of the Rector verbatim: “law

enforcement agencies arriving to decongest the traffic and to disperse the protesting students. When the students refused to move the police used water cannons to disperse them.” (UWC Rector, 2015). This caused a major uproar with students running in various directions up until, according to Miss Khumalo’s recollection, they all gathered at Steel Park gate where the students started burning waste bins and tires (Interview with Miss Khumalo, 2018). The aftermath of this first collision between the police and students is what changed Miss Khumalo’s mind about being a mere observer. She attended the traditional ‘post mortem’ meeting of UWC #FMF that night and felt that “Students, and poor people, people with great potential are ending up in dead end jobs. So... it was about time for me, I guess” (Interview with Miss Khumalo 2018). Ultimately, the chaos at Robert Sobukwe road brought some clarity to some students, and as such the numbers and momentum grew from that day moving forward. The moments of craziness, collision with police and that tested the leadership of UWC #FMF followed swiftly after.



Additionally, in an interview with a much more experienced activist, who was detained and released a number of times during the 2015 and 2016 protests; Philasande Manyala, is where the strategy and process to exit the campus is more closely unpacked. Philasande Manyala is a final year law student at the University of the Western Cape, he was an interim branch leader of PASMA at the time of the 2015 #FMF protest action and was very influential in terms of mobilization; he was fittingly called “the ground force”. When probed on the general mobilization strategy he revealed that it was the interest of the leadership group to keep students interested. Hence, the justification to move between pressurizing the university and pressurizing the state. Exiting the campus gates was informed by this and the need to raise an awareness that would be much more far reaching than shutting down a class or demanding that the library be closed. He argues that:

*“We see education as a right and not a privilege. So we needed to go beyond the gates, to change the perceptions of those out there. We needed to influence the minds of South Africans in order to change the thinking from rights to privilege” (Interview with Philasande Manyala, February 2018).*

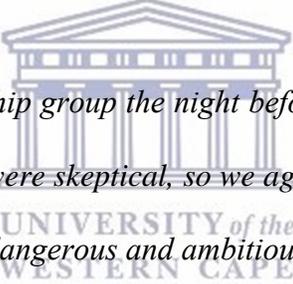
This strategy seemed to work as I recall how we got food supplies, first aid kits and even funding after we staged the protests on Robert Sobukwe road. The public had heeded the call, whether its thinking had changed or transformed to a point of convergence with that of #FMF remained to be seen. With a growing tendency to apply pressure on the state students in Gauteng marched to the Union buildings while those in Bellville, Western Cape, set their sights on the nearest national key point: The Cape Town International Airport.

### **5.2.5 The Long Walk to the Cape Town International Airport**

The UWC #FMF movement gained reasonable momentum from taking its protests outside of the campus. This is confirmed by the reported jovial nature with which the public in congested traffic willingly took alternative routes and occasionally let out the “Amandla” (Power to the People) chant. This is all according to Mr. Shange, Ms. Mchopela and Ms. Khumalo, all participants in the UWC #FMF movement. In this section, however, the moment when the UWC #FMF chapter made the decision to go shutdown the airport, along with the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) chapter of #FMF will be the focus. The outsourced contract workers, calling for the end of outsourcing were present in support of the students’ call for free decolonial education. The #FMF movement nationally had mobilized and integrated outsourced workers, the security and cleaning staff primarily, into the movement. These workers then became one with the students, but the power relation was always that the student was seen as occupying a ‘union-ish’ role as advocates for the insourcing of workers. This is informed by the agency students have and shows

how the freedom to organize vary within certain groups in society, and in the university in particular. This moment finds resonance in the chapter as it is consistent in the interviews as one of the stark memories of most respondents in this study. It also draws out quite a radical element in #FMF decision making, considering that the Cape Town International Airport is a National Key Point.

On the day that the students from CPUT and UWC, under the banner of #FeesMustFall, charged to the airport was the day arguably with the most police presence at any of the protests during the period of 2015 and 2016 at UWC. According to Mr. Shange, the decision to go to shut down the Cape Town International airport was very unpopular amongst the students of UWC. He went on to say:

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building facade with columns and a pediment, with the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' below it.  
*“We discussed it as a leadership group the night before in our caucus before we met the masses. Even amongst us we were skeptical, so we agreed to have it tested by the masses. The masses rejected it as too dangerous and ambitious.”* (Interview with Mxolisi Shange, 2018)

However, according to my own recollection, the next day there was a meeting to be addressed by the UWC Rector scheduled for 13H00pm. The meeting went terribly wrong with students getting agitated by the lack of commitment in the Rector’s address. The students became so dissonant that they refused to listen to even the leaders of the UWC #FMF chapter. It was then that I intervened and stood on top of a table placed in the centre of the student centre and instructed all students to make their way to the Cape Town International Airport. This very rash, and undemocratic decision I took after observing how much faith and interest the students were losing in the movement while the rector was waxing lyrically about how he understood and sympathized but cannot do much.

Looking into the eyes of some students I saw them being convinced and others being incredibly enraged; either way this was bad for the UWC #FMF movement as this could shift the power from #FMF to the UWC management. So, knowing that a radical intervention was needed, I took it upon myself to break that momentum and gave the green light for the Long Walk to the Cape Town International Airport. The directive was met by a loud applause and cheers from the students. The students marched on in droves, hands held and singing songs that would be split in three melodies (that's how vast the march was). However, the real moment was yet to present itself.

According to my own recollection, the students, who included scores from both UWC and CPUT, were literally running to the airport, without a clear plan of what the shutdown would entail, they just kept marching forward. As I was in the front lines, one literally felt the push from what seemed like a few hundred students behind us. This seemingly seamless march to the airport was disrupted by four helicopters, six vans and a 'nyala' that appeared in all angles – in front of, above and behind – the marching group. The police released warning shots, with the water cannon spraying relentlessly at the marching group. What followed was an address from one of the other leaders of CPUT #FMF who reiterated the commitment to 'no retreat, no surrender' which embodied the national student movement which is #FMF. The police then released a final warning declaring that they could not allow the march to continue any further as they have the responsibility to protect the National Key Points.

After what seemed like an endless to and fro, students rushing into the houses of the informal settlement community of Bishop Lavis to find refuge, the cops raiding the houses, and students fighting back with stones, the students seemed to resign themselves to the fact that there was no way to pass Bishop Lavis, and their quest to reach the airport would prematurely end in the recreational park of a dusty Bishop Lavis. What followed then was a long meeting of the students

where the leaders struggled to convince the students to go back to the UWC campus. Ultimately, the students agreed and the travel back was shaped with less energy, adrenaline and desire to disrupt. This moment presents some key findings which showed the character of defiance and moving from mere protests to mass disturbance. The moments to follow would be inside the UWC campus, but would not be any less significant.

### **5.2.6 The UWC Stadium**

Following pressure from protests, the external support garnered by the UWC #FMF chapter and an unrelenting commitment to be heard, the UWC #FMF chapter pushed the SRC to organize a constitutional Student Body Meeting, which the Rector would be invited to address. The initial venue of the meeting, as announced by the SRC, was the UWC main hall. According to my own recollection, the main hall was filled to the brim while more than half of the students, contract workers, staff and the media had not made their way inside. The suggestion was that it be moved to a bigger venue for safety reasons and to allow all into the meeting – and so the story of the UWC stadium begins. The SRC tried to resist this, and I personally engaged the members of risk and compliance to ask for a venue shift. In this small caucus, between myself, the SRC President and a member of UWC Risk and Compliance a decision to change venues was agreed upon. We then all agreed that the SRC President would relay the instruction to all gathered in the main hall. She attempted to speak twice but could not project her voice – albeit with a microphone – beyond the booing of the students. The students starting singing songs that hurled profanities at her. I then intervened, took the microphone and summoned the attention of the students with a few political slogans, I was successful and thereafter announced the venue change to a cheering and adhering crowd.

An interview with Mxolisi Shange, a student activist present throughout the UWC #FMF process was conducted to understand what had happened at the UWC stadium (where students, workers, academics and parents eventually gathered). Mr. Shange was a leader of the Nursing Students Council at the time, and a very active member of ALUTA<sup>3</sup>. According to Mxolisi Shange the meeting at the UWC stadium sharpened the contradictions that existed between the UWC Management, the SRC and UWC #FMF. He says “the meeting started out with the SRC intending to chair it. But the students wouldn’t have that”. He adds that “they booed the SRC and sang songs I would not repeat in this interview, until they started loudly to sing the name of our leader ‘Roza’<sup>4</sup>” (Interview with Mxolisi Shange, 2018). In addition, Nicollete Dirk (2015), reporting from the scene, writes “the meeting took a different turn when the rowdy students refused to give SRC leader Akhona Landu an opportunity to speak”. In an interview with one of the staff members present at the stadium meeting echoed how unprecedented the day was and that it shaped his understanding of #FMF as a whole going forward. He laments the discipline of the students shown towards their own leaders and the disregard for those who they believe oppose them.<sup>5</sup> While being booed by more than 2500<sup>6</sup> students in the UWC stadium that was packed to capacity, Landu appealed for them to settle down” (Dirk, 2015). At this point, I was pleading with both the Vice Chancellor and the SRC President to give me an opportunity to settle things down. My name was being chanted loudly around the stadium, and I used this to demonstrate the necessity to give me a chance to speak.

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<sup>3</sup> ALUTA is a student political formation that was established in 2015 as a breakaway student organization from SASCO. The activists who were leaders and members of, were primarily from SASCO.

<sup>4</sup> Roza is the author’s nickname.

<sup>5</sup> The Staff Member Interviewee (for fear of discrimination) wishes to remain anonymous.

<sup>6</sup>The accurate size of the stadium is found on SAFA West Coast (2006-08-22). "New Provincial Headquarters for SAFA West Coast Regional League"

The other respondents, i.e. Miss Mchopela attest to the tensions at the UWC stadium. Ms Palesa Mchopela was an activist of the EFFsc on UWC campus and a radical feminist voice within the UWC activist space. According to her she had never seen the UWC stadium packed to capacity like that before. This moment was too big to ignore as she recalls how the UWC Rector finally intervened to give me the microphone to address the students. Before the VC gave the microphone to me, he attempted to speak to the students and was booed. (Interview with Palesa Mchopela, 2018). Eventually I was given the microphone and calmed the students down before giving the Rector the chance to speak to the students. I concede it was not as simple as hurling political slogans, but I reminded them of why we protested for 7 days, we wanted the uninterrupted and authentic audience of the UWC Management. This clearly resonated with the students as they allowed the VC to speak after me.



Dirk (2015) reporting for the Independent Online, quoted the UWC Rector saying “You have an opportunity at this meeting to speak to me as you demanded. After this meeting, we will meet with UWC #FeesMustFall students and the SRC.” The Rector had conceded here, after 7 days of resisting to recognize the need to meet #FMF as a representative of a group within the general student body, to meet with representatives of UWC #FMF. On this day, #FMF overcame the hurdle of bureaucratic gymnastics that the UWC management used to avoid discussing the demands of UWC #FMF. The Rector lamented on how the tensions had gotten so far and this students responded in unison with a loud “It’s you”. The stadium gathering was followed by a marathon meeting between representatives of UWC #FMF, UWC SRC and Management. The meeting, after more than eight hours in discussion and a series of compromises and negotiations, presented a contentious outcome with a large group of the UWC #FMF participants not satisfied with the drawn out language, lack of time frames and the acknowledging of issues but lack of commitment

to address them by the UWC management. As I read out the minutes of the marathon meeting to a very irritated crowd of students, I got questions yearning for clarity from all sides. The comments showed clearly that the students weren't satisfied and they felt they were being managed by the executive, in order to not disrupt exams. They felt there were no tangible commitments made. The reaction to the outcomes denoted the level of expectations the students had of UWC #FMF and the meeting.

However, the tensions settled for the evening as the students retired to their residences, only to wake up to an email from the University council chairperson dissociating himself with the already limited victories of UWC #FMF. The chairperson of council went on to call for the judiciary's intervention. Dirk (2015) reports that "the day's chaos was sparked by an e-mail allegedly sent by the chairman of the university council, Mthunzi Mdwaba, stating that an interdict should be sought to stop the disruptions." The UWC #FMF released a statement that reads "The arrogance of the council chair has enraged students and evoked feelings of distrust and dissonance to the process of restoring normality on the campus" (UWC Fees WILL Fall page, 2015). This statement was followed by the traditional call for a mass meeting early that morning – a morning that would prove to be the most fateful for the relations between the students and the university.

### **5.2.7 11 November 2015: A Fateful Moment**

The date 11 November 2015 resonates with most people who were in and around UWC at that time. The morning started off in a very confrontational manner, as 5 students, after an altercation with officials from the UWC Campus Protection Services, were arrested for assault. The reports relating to the arrests interviewed a South African Police Service official who confirmed the arrests. "Police spokeswoman Constable Noloyiso Rwexana said five students were arrested. "The

suspects are facing charges of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and are expected to appear at Bellville court once charged.” (Dirk, 2015). The arrests of the 5 student activists exacerbated the already heightened tensions on the UWC campus that day. When speaking to Palesa Mchopela she reveals how the toughest decision at that point was whether to mobilize all the students to go protest at the police station demanding the release of those arrested or to continue with their cause to get the UWC management to acquiesce to the demands. Ultimately, according to Ms. Mchopela, the decision was to continue with the protest through shutting down the biggest exam venue; the UWC Main Hall. I recall this being both the simplest and yet most difficult decisions for the leadership group to make. It was simple in the sense that if we are to continue protesting we must disrupt the venue that would house most students for sitting exams. On the other hand, it was difficult because we had to accept leaving our fellow comrades in jail, and also contend with the fact that the University would be well prepared to secure the exam venues. Ultimately, the logic that informed disrupting the main hall was that the management would have no alternative venue to house +/-800 students writing in the hall. Whereas, they could improvise if a smaller venue were disrupted. The decision to disrupt exams was informed by the university’s vulnerability when it comes to assessments, and knowing that disrupting the very process that the university is premised on would give the movement enough leverage to get the demands met.

The fateful day would not only be characterized by the early arrests and assault on security guards that took place. More was yet to come, more that revealed quite much about how far UWC #FMF was willing to go in order to be successful in the quest for its demands. There was a decision to disrupt exams, which was not taken lightly by the UWC management nor was it ignored by the SAPS. The collisions between students and private security escalated so rapidly that the SAPS got involved, claiming to be acting on an interim interdict granted by the Western Cape High Court.

The students unleashed fire extinguishers in empty exam rooms, kicking tables and chairs in venues. The police's intervention with teargas, rubber bullets and water cannons saw an outbreak of violence that was not seen before in the period of the protest. Students began looting campus shops and throwing bricks at members of SAPS. The then UWC spokesperson was quoted saying "The University of the Western Cape condemns the unjustified violence, arson, intimidation of students and staff, vandalism of several buildings on campus, as well as the looting of tuck-shops and catering venues on campus today" (Dirk, 2015). The violence was sustained and gradually escalated throughout the afternoon with students and police exchanging the advantage in what resembled an apartheid style 'battle field'. I remember personally calling a trusted member of the clergy Pastor Skosana to try and intervene on our behalf as it seemed the communication had completely broken down between the leaders of the movement and the UWC management. The pastor got hold of the then Chancellor, Archbishop Mokgoba to intervene. After a series of discussions with the head of public order policing and 12 more arrests, the Archbishop managed to facilitate a truce which was premised on the then Chancellor conveying the demands of #FMF and organizing a re-sitting of the marathon meeting.

However, the UWC #FMF leadership collective insisted on the Chancellor being a mediator in these meetings as the students made clear the faith lost in the executive management. The evening was followed by a traditional post mortem meeting that took longer than any meeting before. We sat in one of the recreational rooms on the campus residences for 4 hours trying to reach consensus on how to move forward. The contradictions were sharp within the movement. I remember asking one of my fellow leaders to chair the session so as I could be on the ground to influence the need for strategic retreat. Before I unpack what I mean by strategic retreat, let me first explain the process of influencing meetings by the nucleus. We understood that the masses had demands, and

we also accepted that at some point tough decisions needed to be made. So what we adopted as a strategy is to always have two facilitators of a meeting, and the rest of about five, would be in the plenary. The job of those on the ground would be to spark a debate that came from caucuses of the leadership group. It is upon this background that the leadership group opted for a strategic retreat in order to focus on bail funds mobilization for the arrested students, and to regain momentum to apply pressure on other fronts. Ultimately, this moment, along with others mentioned above, revealed important details about the #FMF movement at UWC.



Figure 5.2: \*Lindokuhle chairing a meeting after student-police collisions, in the presence of Archbishop Mokgoba, the University Registrar and students\*

In conclusion, the chapter maps out, in intentionally descriptive terms, the key moments that shaped the UWC #FMF chapter. The chapter considers these the moments that are not exclusively important, but of key interest to this study and its aims. The ordering of the events

presents an intricate evolution of the movement itself, which allows for in depth theoretical engagements with the findings.



## Chapter 6 – The Relationship between the Theory and the Data

*“This week, the youth of South Africa shook this nation to the core; they took their destiny into their hands and put a failing political leadership on notice. Through #FeesMustFall, they have shown what true leadership, courage and solidarity means. On Friday the Class of 2015 takes their battle to the seat of government. It is a moment of reckoning for our nation and, mostly, for President Jacob Zuma.” (Ranjeni Munusamy, Daily Maverick 2015)*

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter engages with the data collected in relation to the theory developed in the framework for analysis. The framework is made up of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and supplemented with Althusser’s ISA and RSA. The main point of the chapter is to pull the data through the theory to examine the relationship that exists between the two. Also, to test and extend the theory in answering the research question. The chapter will foreground its argument by assessing the hegemonic. It will then, in relation to the hegemonic, build a base to assess the counter hegemonic – using the theory and data. After the foregrounding, the chapter is organized in three main parts, namely: the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), the Repressive State Apparatus and Hegemony. Under the theme of ISA the role of the media and the University will be dealt with and under that of RSA the role of the SAPS, Private Security and the Judiciary will be dealt with. Then finally, to bring it altogether the last theme would be hegemony, to understand the extent to which and whether the data suggests counter-hegemonic quality of the #FMF movement.

### 6.1.1 Unpacking the Contradictions

It is clear that in order to understand or evaluate counter-hegemony there must be an understanding of the hegemonic. In the case of this study the contradiction is between student and government, seen through #FMF vs. State. To understand what is counter hegemonic, there must be an identification and understanding of the hegemonic. Hence, the need to identify, contextualize and unpack these contradictions as they play themselves out in the data. This is to foreground the conditions that give rise to #FMF so as to understand it in relation to what gives impetus to its formation.

Marxian theory, the bedrock of this study's overall theory, is useful for unpacking the contradictions that inform the rise of movements such as #FMF. Gramsci (1971) posits the state at the altar of these contradictions. He argues that the logic of the state is to keep a particular class of people at the elite and another as exploited. He further understands this as a primary contradiction that exists between two classes, as Marx (1968) puts it, which are labour and capital. Gramsci goes further to aid Marxist scholarship by interrogating how the class system, engendered through the logic of capital, keeps the conditions that reproduce it intact. As such, Gramsci delves into the realm of ideas, where most battles are won or lost – civil society. This point he makes through the conceptualization of hegemony; how do common sense notions of human organization become naturalized into objective reality? (Gramsci, 1971)<sup>7</sup>.

It is upon this backdrop that hegemony as a concept helps us understand the contradictions between the state and civil society, and also unpack sub contradictions that exist as a consequence of the principal contradictions. It is to understand how #FMF, as an organ of civil society, has challenged

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<sup>7</sup> This point is made in the collection of Gramsci's Selected Prison Notebooks, published in 1971. It is in a letter he wrote to one of the leaders of his party while incarcerated by the fascist Mussolini regime.

the hegemony of the state, through the university. Thus, hegemony – consent and coercion – and Althusser’s ISA and RSA help us understand how the state uses its apparatus (institutions) to remain hegemonic and to manage the inevitable contradictions that are presented by the status quo. Moreover, the breakout of #FMF protests is a classic example of what happens when the contradictions are too sharp.

The study contends with the interesting dynamic presented by the findings; that students demand access to higher education, using tactics and strategies that undermine the very legitimacy of the institutions they demand access to. An uncritical engagement with this would see this as plainly paradoxical and impractical, hence, it is the intention of this chapter to unpack the nuances that would inform a group in society disrupting a space in attempt to gain access to it.

Ultimately, drawing on the framework of analysis of this study and the data gathered, this chapter will show three things. The first is how the foundations of the contradiction between civil society and the state are a consequence of capitalist relations embodied by the South African state. From there, the study uses Gramsci to explain, directly, how consent and coercion is used to manage the said contradictions. Finally, the chapter will use Althusser’s isolation of particular state institutions as tools to manufacture consent, or to force it – the ISA and RSA. The UWC case will be viewed through the lens of the framework and as such show UWC #FMF challenges, if at all, the hegemonic – how consent, coercion and the apparatus of the state acted. Did UWC #FMF influence these actions? If so, what does this suggest about UWC #FMF’s counter-hegemonic quality?

## **6.2 Defining the Hegemonic**

Gramsci understands hegemony as the dominant ideas established by the bourgeoisie and reinforced by the state in the interest of a ruling capitalist class. Gramsci argues that the use of

ideology is more sustainable than the application of force. In fact, he argues for a systemic navigation between the two. Gramsci notes that the state facilitates an engendering of certain common sense values, through ideology to naturalize the ideas that keep the ruling class ruling and the marginalized classes marginalized. Taking a leaf from the findings, the state's response to #FMF was not purely repressive, as Palesa Mchopela puts it "We had a genuine call, and not even the state could deny that, at first". She recalls how the Ministry of higher education and training tried to influence the movement by organizing summits and inviting student leaders in order to get the movement closer to "a compromise" (Interview with Palesa Mchopela, 2018). Ms. Mchopela's remarks show the ideological effort made by the state to manage the relations between state and #FMF, thus seek to reinforce the common sense values of compromise, negotiation and impose a subjective 'rationality'.



Therefore, the hegemonic is not only the state, but the ideas of the state – the common sense. In order for UWC #FMF to be successful in its quest to challenge the dominant notions on access to higher education it had to expose the flaws of the status quo. I recall addressing students outside the East Gate at UWC. Standing on top of a waste bin I shouted "we have gained access to this place only to be guaranteed an empty handed exit. Our futures are not guaranteed because we are poor and have less than half a chance in this place". This riled students up as it spoke to the reality of most in UWC #FMF or they knew people who went through this. The leadership group of UWC #FMF identified the importance of challenging hegemonic notions which accept a university degree as a commodity, and therefore can be taken away if not paid for. As such, phrases such as "Asinamali" "Makuliwe"<sup>8</sup>. This thinking and the phrases strengthened the idea that the students

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<sup>8</sup> "We don't have money" is a direct translation, which emphasized the condition of students. "Let us fight" is a declaration that we will do whatever it takes to get what we want.

were no longer accepting the fact that the state's delays with making higher education available for all. Interestingly, one of the respondents, Mr. Shange, noted that as the protests heightened and the leaders were engaged in interviews with the mainstream media more often, worries started looming back home. He cites that his family starting citing concerns about his involvement in the protests, words such as "We did not send you there to stop others from writing exams, we sent you there to get a degree" struck him (Interview with Mxolisi Shange, 2018). This shows again, as Gramsci's theory of hegemony suggests, how hegemonic notions arise and are sustained in society. The ideas that inform his family about how people should demand their rights are informed by the society they are in.

The form of political society is informed by the ruling class ideas of life and therefore are hegemonic. For the purposes of this study, nonetheless, the interest is to evaluate whether there is a contestation of this *hegemony* by #FMF at UWC and if so, to what extent. To understand this the study has employed Althusser's conception of the ISA which leans on consent and RSA which leans on coercion and will interrogate the actions of both #FMF at UWC, the University and the state using this model to determine whether or not there is counter hegemonic character within #FMF.

### **6.3 Ideological State Apparatus (ISA)**

The ideological state apparatus (ISA) coined by Althusser (1971), as explained in the theory chapter, are the tools at the behest of the state which it uses to immerse society with its ideas. There are examples in the findings that show the use of various ideological apparatuses in managing the contradictions sharpened by #FMF.

The protests in 2015 happened on campuses nationwide, the focus was on the destabilization of the University, also known as "Shutdown", as a strategy to strengthen the demand for free

education. Naturally it would mean that the first institution to contend with this would be the university. UWC, the subject of this investigation, was no different. Hence, the UWC campus was also shut down, classes were halted and gates were blocked by students. The interesting thing here is that the theory lends a suggestion that universities, according to Althusser, are sites that reproduce the common sense values that inform the status quo, which in this case are capitalist social relations (Althusser, 1971). Althusser makes this case by including the university as part of the educational apparatus which is meant to strengthen the values of the state. Notwithstanding this, UWC #FMF arises with radically alternate notions on access to higher education. The emphasis by leaders like Ms. Mchopela (Interview 2018) on “not only a fee free education, but a decolonial one. We want to be taught Africa as well”. The sentiments of Ms. Mchopela along with literature and class room activity in the university all aid UWC #FMF in contesting what students are being taught and both epistemological and qualitative access to the university. As such, UWC #FMF, along with other chapters as well, shows the fluidity of society, and that the theory itself cannot be static in its understanding of institutions in the state. Ultimately, the university was forced to manage this dissent, which is the area where further inquiry on UWC #FMF counter hegemonic quality can be assessed.

### **6.3.1 The University**

Some examples in the findings that illustrate how the university responds as a proxy of the state is that the University refers to its incapacity to deal with the demand as the funding of tertiary education is a government priority (Statement by UWC Rector, 2015). Also, the university leans on an ailing economy and therefore do not see fee free education as plausible in the immediate.

Eventually, when the university cannot manage to get the movement to consent to this, it threatens to expel student leaders and filed for urgent interdicts against protests. A communication by the University confirms this “the University has now secured an additional court order preventing the group of protesting workers and students from disrupting the academic program. The court order authorises and directs the police to intervene and assist the University. The court order has been served, read and explained to the protesting group.” (Statement by the UWC Rector, 2016). Nonetheless, the university’s actions are not intended with malice, the malice is just inferred in the logic under which it operates as an institution.

As such, the intervention of this study has, throughout, been to tease out the nuances of hegemony. Nonetheless, the institutions Althusser refers to are those which he argues reproduce dominant ideas of the regime within their particular context in society. In this case, there is focus on the University, which forms part of the educational ISA and the media which forms part of the communications ISA. Here the intention is to see how the media and the University, in their day to day unquestioned existence are proxies of the state in carrying out its cultural or ideological hegemony in society. There is a critical evaluation of how the state used the two institutions, and how UWC #FMF used these to its advantage. Finally, this section will draw certain conclusions on the contradiction that plays out in terms of the utility of these two institutions both by the state, and by the UWC #FMF movement.

The study concedes, as it will do when dealing with all state institutions examined in this chapter, that it would be critically flawed to assume that the University, as an institution, exists without question to do as told by managers of the state bureaucracy. If so, #FMF, which seeks to challenge the state and the university, for that matter, would not entirely be possible. Let me unpack this further, the university in its foundations does acknowledge that knowledge production is best

facilitated in a space of robust debate in order to get to the best possible answers to the world's questions. Hence, the same logic informs #FMF and therefore, if the university was purely repressive and without this logic there would not be a space for dissent. As such, #FMF is a direct product of what a university stands for; critical thinking, regardless of how uncomfortable it may be. However, the study seeks to show the boundaries that exist on dissent, even in an institution that 'supposedly' has no boundaries; at least intellectually. Showing these boundaries can only be done by examining actions that attempt to cross or shift the boundaries – this being the hegemonic notions and the boundaries being the parameters set out by hegemonic notions.

As such, it must be noted that the University, as Althusser (1971) argues, forms part of the educational apparatus of the state. It is the venue for the reproduction of certain values which aid hegemonic notions of the state. Althusser (1971; 19) argues that “there is no such thing as a purely repressive or purely ideological state”. This statement by Althusser helps this study clearly outline how the state moves between repression and the manufacturing of concession as much as it needs. Althusser notes also that the state would rather employ its ideological apparatus in order to avoid the use of the repressive. After all, the idea of the repressive apparatus being there as a consequence would ideally be enough to avoid instituting actual repressive means to gain consent. Thus, institutions like the University are spaces where the state ensures hegemonic notion in society are reproduced, and this influence is not direct, again, but the logic of the university is not different from the logic of the state hence the congruence in values. It is noteworthy that Althusser's reading of the relation between state institutions and civil society is very linear, and as such does not acknowledge the agency that civil society has in challenging the state. Hence, the use of Gramsci is fitting as it is flexible enough to work in a latitude for dissent. This shows the possibilities of dissent are there, and how it is managed as it occurs. Consent manufacturing is therefore a process

of ideologically managing any elements of counter-hegemony; and the university happens to be one such institution.

The state made use of the university, through its managers, by regurgitating the language of the state's financial incapacity to deal with the burden of making education free for all. A joint statement by all Rectors, Vice Chancellors (VC) and Principals of South African universities, mastered with diplomacy, came out after the President had announced a no fee increment for the year 2016. The statement made remarks such as “we support the quest for access to quality higher education and we have a collective responsibility to safeguard the integrity and credibility of our higher education system” and “We believe that all students are entitled to the same quality of education, regardless of their economic or social standing” (Joint Statement of SA Universities' Vice Chancellors, 2015). Reading the initial parts of the statement one would believe there is a clear meeting of minds between the #FMF movement and the leaders of South African universities. The VC's echoed the call made by #FMF, agreeing on the need to increase access to university and to make the financial provisions necessary to see this through. Adding to this was Mr. Mdepa, a university administrator, in an interview when he states that “the call of #FMF is a very correct one... A call for free education I support” (Interview with Mr. Mdepa, 2018). However, the statement followed the pattern of statements made by VCs on campuses – acknowledging the call first, just to cite the impracticality associated with it. A part of the statement reads:

“It is our view that the zero percent increase in fees for 2016 will offer some reprieve to students as government will make a contribution towards this shortfall. However, the funding of a higher education system is based on a cost sharing model in which the state subsidizes each student and students, in turn, are expected to pay their own contribution.”

(Joint Statement of SA VCs, 2015)

This angle being very consistent with that of the state when it cannot, or even at times refuses to meet the demands of any group in society; ‘we hear and agree with you, but simply cannot implement it for practical reasons’. This shows how the state is very much alive in the university. The university is almost a proxy of the state – extending the state’s ideological response to the demand for a fee free education. Mr. Mdepa, as well, found himself “shocked” at the method of UWC #FMF at times - which is a disapproval of the violence.

When speaking to Palesa Mchopela, an EFFsc activist, she cites how the UWC #FMF group saw the university, represented by the executive management, as a proxy of the government. She claims that in meetings, the executive relied heavily on similar ideological positions as the government as to why it could not meet campus based demands such as the scrapping of historical debt and the increase of student accommodation spaces. She adds that when UWC #FMF applied pressure on the university, using local issues, lack of resources was the UWC executive’s crutch, and if free education was on the table, the university pointed to the state. “This was all useless for us because we knew the government kept referring to the no fee increment announcement as a response to the movement’s central demand”. (Interview with Palesa Mchopela, 2018)

Moreover, the convergence in language, and the statements that isolated UWC #FMF as a disgruntled group of 30 (Statement by the UWC Rector, October 2015), were all ways in which the university, as apparatus of the state, again acted in defense of hegemonic notions. The hegemonic notions being that it is completely unreasonable to shut down universities in demand of more access to them (#FMF at UWC shut down the campus for 9 days). Hence, a shut-down university has no knowledge production activity, no research, no teaching and no learning, which ultimately renders it null. As a result, the university has no choice but to defend its legitimacy, and as such, perhaps incidentally, defends that of the state. Nonetheless, the university is not the only

ideological apparatus focused on in the study. The role and utility of the media by both the UWC #FMF and the government is examined as well.

### **6.3.2 The Media**

This section will analyse the media as one of the ideological state apparatuses in relation to #FMF in general, and at UWC in particular. The section unpacks, with a focus on UWC, how the print, social and Television media was utilized by both #FMF and the University, together with the state to advance or defend its respective agendas. The intention is to navigate the nuance that exists in the utility of the media, in the case of UWC. The study looks to go beyond Althusser's noting of it as a tool that can be used to reinforce ideas of the ruling class, it notes how those opposing these ideas, on any front, can also use the same instruments to advance their positions. The section will deal with the following the uses of traditional vs. social media; look at the media as a site of struggle, look at and unpack the shifting reaction to #FMF protests by the media. Also the section will draw on the data to identify specific moments where the media has shifted its tone and finally it will locate this shift in the parameters of Gramsci's understanding of manufacturing consent.

#### **i. Media as a Site of Struggle**

According to Lister et.al. (2009) the media can be referred to as “the collective communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data. It is either associated with communication media, or the specialized mass media communication businesses such as print media and the press”. Historically the media has been understood in the realm of the press, print, advertising and communication. As such, they argue that the understanding of media has always been a function of the cultural and material products of those institutions. The media has characteristics such as information sharing, agenda setting and educating the public. For the purposes of this study the agenda setting function of the media is looked at to draw on how the

media prompts public discourse, and as such, to a certain extent, can influence the direction and content of public discourse. Hence, the selection of what to report on, and what angle to take is key to the function of the media. In support of this, McCombs and Shaw (1972) write that “in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position”. This is where the communications apparatus is then used by the state to shape a particular understanding of #FMF, whether positive or negative. The media was very important in the #FMF movement nationally, and at UWC as well. It was the battle ground where the movement and the University/State negotiated its effect on public discourse during the period of the protests in 2015. As such, one of the respondents, Mangaliso Nompula, reflected on the contradictions that existed within the movement, between the movement and the SRC and how these he felt were always the interests of reporters, “It was almost as if their target was to find a weakness in our movement, questioning our strategy and reasoning” (Interview with Mangaliso Nompula, 2018). Furthermore, the battle of statements, as I call it, between the university, the movement and the department of higher education also contributes to this undertaking that the media became a site for the battle for hegemony; at least in as far as the fee free decolonial education is concerned. On average, UWC #FMF wrote a statement a day and circulated it to the media, and the same can be said for the University with about twelve updates from the Rector’s office during the heightened protest period.

Gramsci makes this point clearly when unpacking cultural hegemony. He emphasizes, in the Prison Notebooks, the power of ideas as a tool to sustain hegemony. Given the agenda setting function of the media, its position as ‘independent’ and ‘watchdog’ in society more often than not allows it to

influence the thinking of any society. For Gramsci, it would be difficult to conceive any challenge to hegemonic notions without attending to the ideological common sense that it reinforces. Asserting this point is Mike Wayne (2003) who looks at the media as part of the productive forces of capital, alongside human labour and knowledge (Wayne, 2003: 36). He posits the media at the productive point of capital not in the orthodox sense of production, but rather in the ideological sense of creating the conditions of production. Moreover, Wayne's intervention is important as it shows that the battle of ideas, like Gramsci argues, is at the level of civil society which makes the media an important tool given its agenda setting proclivities. Wayne further writes that "the struggle between classes in effect is a fight carried out over the uses to which the forces of production are put... the struggles around the communicative forces of production, are themselves an important subset of the productive forces generally" (Wayne, 2003: 39). The case he makes here is that the media is an integral part of capitalist social relations, which are the bedrock of the status quo. Hence, in the case of the UWC experience, both UWC #FMF and the management used the media as a tool to foreground its ideas on free education. For instance, drawing on an example in the findings, both the UWC management and #FMF chapter had an increased presence in the media during the time of protests – the presence informed fundamentally by their take on free education. UWC #FMF relied on interviews with media houses, Television and radio stations to articulate its position on the issues, which is exactly what the UWC management, through the rector used as well. Another example is an interview I had on ANN7 where the chairperson of Council Mthunzi Mdwaba and I were interviewed. In objective reflection on the interview, the platform was meant to bring us closer to a meaningful solution, yet it ended with us further apart than before it. This was due to the fact that we saw it as an opportunity to mobilize the audience's (public) sympathy.

Ultimately, this analysis is important not only for its exposition on the role of the media in its communicative apparatus form in the UWC experience. Also because it shows the actions and reactions of both UWC as a representative of the state's hegemonic notions on access to higher education, and UWC #FMF as a representative of a counter-hegemonic disposition.

## ii. Traditional vs. Social Media

When #FMF started, given the broad and positive reaction, it is arguable that it was received as a breath of fresh air in the South African political landscape. South Africa, with its fair share of issues at the time such as allegations of state capture and worrying economic uncertainty, caught on to this wave of student protests with nostalgia of the past and reminiscent of the 1976 generation of students who stood against the apartheid regime. This is a narrative shaped by the media as it reported about #FMF. As the momentum of the protests grew nationally, as the language became clearer and the determination of the #FMF cadre became more fortified, the media was there to show it to the world, Munusamy of the Daily Maverick wrote:

*“When Nelson Mandela died in December 2013, South Africa went through a period of mourning and soul searching about who we were and where we were heading. We have been in a state of leaderless turmoil for years and moments like Madiba’s death forced a hard look at ourselves...” (Ranjeni Munusamy, Daily Maverick 2015)*

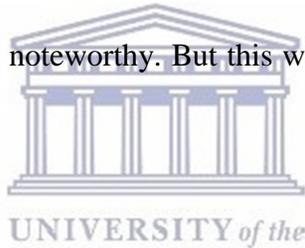
Munusamy (2015) reflects on the protests led by #FMF as an exposition of the state of leadership in the country. Her reminiscent recalling of Nelson Mandela suggests how things might have been better under him, and perhaps how the then President veered from his thinking. Munusamy is one

of the most respected journalists in South Africa. She contributes to the rapidly growing Daily Maverick media site which Moody (2013) describes as “the thoughtful, left-field news and analysis website quickly picked up an audience and became a fixture in our media landscape”. This puts her and others of her ilk in prime position to set the tone for society’s engagement with any phenomenon. As such, it is interesting to note Munusamy’s positive reporting on #FMF in its infancy stages, which does shift as #FMF evolves.

Mangaliso Nompula, UWC #FMF leader, echoing a similar feeling laments “we were darlings of the media being coined as the golden generation, until we refused the 0% announcement by the then President” (Interview with Nompula 2018). He shows here how the shift in media reporting was informed, according to him and the leadership group, by their insistence on protesting even though Jacob Zuma had conceded to freeze fee increases. Nompula (2018) argues that this was not the fight, the fight was for free education and thus felt no need to disband the struggle without attaining its goal. Important to note, is that there is a concession, which the media works with, before a shift in narrative which demonizes #FMF. My take here is that the media did not shift its view of #FMF due to an instruction from the government, instead the media acted in the same way it responds to all protest action; first as necessary dissent then, as the protests gain more traction and cause more instability, as unreasonable anarchic actions informed by sinister motives. The Marikana massacre is an example. The strike of August 2012 inspired headlines such as “Miners’ Strike for Better Wages” (Global Nonviolent Action Database, 2012) in which the articles unpacked the sincerity of the demands for a R12 500 salary for rock drillers. The miners sustained the strike and affected production which forced the mining management to enforce a deadline, which the miners ignored. This sparked police intervention which arguably set the violence alight. According to Hischel-Burns (2015) “some miners reacted to the shooting of fellow miners by

taking a more violent approach and began carrying weapons". It was after the retaliation of the miners that headlines shifted. It started becoming untenable to support a strike that was violent, and as such the pilgrimage in reporting becomes inevitable. This is no different to #FMF, and this is not incidental, but is however ingrained in the common sense values of this society.

Therefore, it is these hegemonic ideas that make it inconceivable for the #FMF movement to continue to insist on protests even though a concession to freeze fee increments was reached. As Marx (1983) lamented on the dominant ideas in any regime being the ruling class ideas, here it is proved that the media are products of broader naturalization of ideas and therefore their actions, informed by these ideas, reinforce hegemonic notions of state/civil society engagements. The ideas of limits, negotiation and compromise is beneficial to the state, hence when it is seen to give off something, it is usually as something noteworthy. But this was not to be the case with #FMF, at least not immediately.



In 2016 during the second installment of the #FMF protests after a spate of events the then Chief Operations Officer of the SABC took a decision to no longer broadcast violent protests. Mr. Hlaudi Motsoeneng was quoted by Eye Witness News saying "as a public service broadcaster we have a mandate to educate the citizens, and we therefore have taken this bold decision to show that violent protests are not necessary" (Khoza, EWN, 2016). This was followed by the SABC dismissing eight of its top journalists who took issue with what was a highly contested policy.

Moreover, the decision by the South African Broadcasting Commission to barre the publishing/broadcasting of any violent protests, which could be a reaction to the #FMF protests outbreak, shows a more deliberate action that had the capacity to shift public perception on #FMF. If the media reporting is centered on #FMF being violent, there is no need to entertain whatever

demands #FMF has. This is a sign of how the state, through the creation of a particular logic that reinforces certain values, attempted to arrest the growing popularity of the movement which could possibly erode its legitimacy moving forward, or even spark more protests from other groups in society. As such, #FMF showed signs of gaining traction on public discourse, in as far as its demands are concerned.

The common means of mass communication for the #FMF movement, across all participating universities, was social media; Twitter and Facebook in particular. This pattern is deduced from how the statements or call for meetings, announced on the social media platforms of the movement, would be the point of departure for mainstream media reporting on the state of affairs in South African campuses during that period. The University of the Western Cape executive, for example, were constantly engaged in responses to UWC #FMF statements, which UWC #FMF published on social media. This pattern shows how #FMF set the pace in the narrative of university fees, which demanded a particular response from both university managers and the government. The common thing was for university managers to deflect responsibility to the government, for instance when the Rector addressed the UWC students at the student centre he mentions that he sympathizes with the cause as both a father and academic, but can however not make fee free education a possibility as it is beyond the scope of his power<sup>9</sup>. This was always followed by the government citing the limitations of the public purse. What is evident is that #FMF evoked a response and, whether the response was what it desired or not, this shows how it brought the state to the table by provoking its use of its different apparatus at its disposal to manage the situation.

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<sup>9</sup> #FeesMustFall #EndOutsourcing - UWC Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2015, Rector Speech, student response. YouTube

Therefore, with the advent of technology new media as explained by Lister et.al. (2009) “has expanded the processes through which information and representations of the media were distributed”. New media has seen the introduction of other forms of media, with social media being of interest in this case. Social media has allowed #FMF through the use of the widespread nature of social media platforms, the hashtag (#) which acts as an alert and tracks trends to counter the narrative proffered by the mainstream media to somewhat its advantage. For instance, as one of the respondents mentioned in an interview that the UWC #FMF chapter leadership group would encourage its members to be present on social media, Twitter and Facebook in particular, to counter negative impressions on the movement, he says they used it as a rehabilitation tool for the UWC #FMF brand (Interview with Philasande Manyala, 2017). #FMF used the social media platform as a way of staying relevant amidst negative mainstream media reporting, and sustained its capacity to mobilize. The fact that #FMF cadres went against a growing negative reputation, to continue to wage its battle for access to education speaks volumes of the determination of the students. Moreover, it shows that although it did not call for the complete destruction of the university, only more access, it did show qualities that threatened the hegemonic ideas of the status quo in as far as relations between state and civil society. It went beyond the usually accepted concessions, and hence forced the state to institute a much more repressive response in attempts to manage it.

#### **6.4 Repressive State Apparatus**

This section will look at the repressive arm of the state and its intervention in #FMF students’ protests. The section will show how the data intersects with the theory, in as far as the RSA, as coined by Althusser relates. Louise Althusser (1971:17) defines the repressive state apparatus as

“the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc., which constitute what I shall in future call the Repressive State Apparatus. Repressive suggests that the State Apparatus in question ‘functions by violence’ – at least ultimately (since repression, e.g. administrative repression, may take non-physical forms).”

The section will be organized as follows; looking at the South African Police Service, the UWC Campus Protection Services and the SA Judiciary.

#### **6.4.1 The South African Police Service**

Most states around the world have got police services, or security police, which act as a service to police or secure the citizens of a particular nation. South Africa is no different, however it transitioned from having security police under apartheid to having a police service in democratic South Africa. The security branch, as it was called was responsible for a range of issues. Potgieter (1974) states the Security Branch was charged with internal security, primarily sabotage, other guerrilla proponents and Communism, and was used extremely efficiently during the Apartheid years to repress anti-government organizations. The apartheid police were instrumental, through force and violence, in repressing any anti-apartheid logic.

The distinction between Apartheid and democratic policing is important as it shows clearly the contradictions that are presented in society even by a ‘police service’ in democratic SA that is expected to protect and serve South African communities. Therefore in this section I will unpack the involvement of the police in #FMF, particularly at UWC, in order to use the theory to understand its utility in the processes of managing contradictions and sustaining particular hegemonic notions.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2015 when the UWC #FMF chapter took to the streets outside the University campus, rushing to block the busy Robert Sobukwe road, it was to be the first interaction between the students and police. As explicated in the findings, the students on this day broadened the horizons of the protest to gain traction in the South African discourse as a means to apply pressure on the state. One of the respondents in the research, Nompula, said this strategy was informed by the need to institute what he termed “a two-tiered strategy”. Nompula notes that the movement had gained momentum on campus using local campus issues but also had to find a way to attend to the central demand of the movement; free decolonial education (Interview with Mangaliso Nompula, 2018).

However, the public order police unit intervened after traffic had to be redirected due to the blockade. The Police issued two warnings before spraying water cannons over the masses of students, and deploying teargas to disperse the students. The process resulted in the injury of three female students, which was confirmed by a statement made by the Rector on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2015. The consequence of this particular collision was that students feared continuing the protest at first. The leadership, as unpacked in chapter five, was tasked with the challenge of using the collision with police as a way to agitate students further, to justify a revolutionary outlook on the movement which would give it more traction. Students like Miss Khumalo, another respondent in the research, were angered by what she saw as police brutality and was more determined to see the aims and objectives of the movement through. What is noteworthy here is that the police responded in a way that looked merely to disperse the students from blocking a road, which resulted in chaos and injury to some, however the UWC #FMF chapter used this as a way to further consolidate a mass student base. This incident was followed by more drastic collections with the police that resulted in arrests and injuries of security personnel, police and students.

In chapter five there is a description of what is termed a fateful moment for UWC #FMF, the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. On this day a protracted collision between students and police ensued. The interesting thing about the police on this occasion is that they were working on orders of a court interdict. The attitude of the police was informed by ‘curbing protests by all means necessary’ instead of dispersing students. The repressive element of the interdict will be dealt with later in this chapter. For now, it is to note that 22 students were arrested on the day, according to an article published in News24 on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2015. Some of the respondents recall the police being harsher, according to their measure, than earlier encounters.

Furthermore, one can deduce a shift in attitude of the police from before and after both the no increment announcement by the President and the interdict against protests. After the no fee increment announcement, and on-going protests, I received an email with an interdict with my name on it that read “UWC vs Lindokuhle Mandyoli and 11 others”. The interdict had my name along with 11 other leaders of the movement. The interdict barred protesting in groups and sanctioned the names on the interdict and those who associate with them from gathering. The relations deteriorated significantly between UWC #FMF and the university after the interdict was sought by the UWC executive management. It was clear that the university could no longer manufacture some sort of truce and thus had to resort to a much more repressive strategy. It is here where the theory can explain the move from an ideological effort to manufacture consent, to a repressive one. As such, as has been the case in this chapter, understanding counter-hegemony is best done in tension with hegemony. Hence, UWC #FMF pushed the hegemonic to a point where it needed to be repressive in defense of its hegemony.

The police, acting within their ambit and arresting protesters and ‘ensuring’ peace are doing so in satisfaction of what they understand to be right. The institution of policing is itself informed by

the logic that there cannot be sustained unrest, no matter how worthy the cause maybe. Hence, the intervention of this theses, as enshrined in Gramscian thought, is that the common sense values that inform policing, are that which are hegemonic in society. For instance, the Marikana massacre can be used as an example. The Marikana Massacre was a tragic shooting, resulting from a collision between police and mine workers, which was sparked by a violent police intervention in a strike of LonMin workers on a veld near the Nkaneng shack settlement in Marikana on Thursday, 16 August 2012 (Marinovich, 2012). The incident resulted in 34 miners dying and an additional 78 more injured, causing a series of public backlash levelled against the police and the South African government. Marinovich (2012) continues

*“Further controversy emerged after it was discovered that most of the victims were shot in the back and many victims were shot far from police lines. It was the single most deadly incident between police and the civilian population in South Africa since the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre and has been referred to as a turning-point in post-1994 South African society”*

Again, it is important to note the difficulty to conceive how police officers, with families, would go out one day to kill more than 30 human beings. This is not entirely usual, however the logic of police work in defense of the common sense values of the state it operates in makes it normal to do so. This can also be detected by the public’s reaction to the massacre. Yes there were pockets of sustained backlashes, however over time the overwhelmingly hegemonic notions of what is normal and acceptable took over even the most sympathetic hearts. So the bourgeoisie state has to constantly influence ideas in society as a means of managing the contradictions. Hence, the killing of 34 human beings by the police can be lost in the pages of history without significant and

sustained campaigns against it; the values of the society have found it normal to defend the logic of the South African state.

Thus, #FMF was questioning those very values, and ignited a repressive strategy from the police in defense of hegemonic notions, which benefit the ruling and capitalist class. Therefore, as much as a society without a police service or a judiciary is inconceivable it is also important to look critically evaluate the logic that informs their existence and how they feed into power relations in society.

#### **6.4.2 The Judiciary**

The Judiciary has had a notable role in the #FMF protests and has influenced perception and even capacity of the #FMF movement to mobilise. In this section the judiciary will be explored as a repressive apparatus whose actions can be seen as deflating the #FMF movement. The section will review the number of students arrested during the protests at UWC and give a brief account of the prosecutorial processes that followed arrests, as part of the ways in which the state has been repressive against the movement. Notwithstanding this intention, the study notes, guided by the theory, that the judiciary is an integral part of a democracy and would be viewed by an uncritical eye as being independent and always working in the best interest of social justice. The study concedes, to this end, that those ideals might be inscribed in the founding and guiding principles of the judiciary, but the judiciary, much like any other institution of the state is a function of the logic and hegemonic notions of the state. Therefore, it is the intervention of this study that the judiciary's punitive measures in dealing with #FMF activists was informed by a reinforcing of

these hegemonic notions; almost saying ‘we agree education should be accessible, but accept the concession at least it’s something’.

According to Lethukuthula Ntombela, an accounting graduate at UWC arrested in his residence in 2015, over a period of two years (2015/2016) a total of 54 students were arrested. Eight of these students, in the 2015 year were released on a warning. Whilst the rest had to stand trial at the Bellville Magistrate’s Court. A sum of 20 of the students charged were only dropped in 2017 and the final 25 were dropped in March of 2018, this is two years after being arrested. Many students’ arrested in 2016, including Ntombela, bail was denied at their first appearance in court. The Daily Maverick (2016) wrote “UWC students marched back to campus to meet and decide on a plan of action after 25 students were denied bail in the Bellville Magistrate's Court on Friday”. The judge impressed on the students, and the audience in the court that these protests were infringing on the rights of other students to write exams and use facilities that would allow them to perform optimally. I surmise that in a punitive way the judge sent a message to the rest of UWC #FMF about the consequences of continued protest. The arrested students were sent to one of South Africa’s most notorious prisons, Pollsmoor Correctional Centre (Personal Communication with Lethukutula Ntombela, 2018). The students stayed there for a week as the judge awaited the state to gather evidence required. This was the first sign of the judiciary’s punitive hand.

I was present in the courtroom when the judge handed down the bail denial. One could tell that he was irritated with the students and was deliberately, in his own words, teaching all those who “went against law and order a memorable lesson”. Thus, the judiciary, in partnership with the police, was doing what seemed as the right thing; locking up thugs who disrupt exams and burn buildings. Yet, it is the constitutional framework, which informs the judiciary, upon which the #FMF’s central demand rests on. This is not to say violence is acceptable, but is to show that

Gramsci's theory of hegemony which posits ruling class ideas as common sense values fairly explains how society can see police shooting unarmed students as unfortunate but necessary and students throwing stones at police as violent and barbaric. The point is, these ideas are not objective realities, but informed by social constructs meant to satisfy a particular hegemonic agenda.

Thus, #FMF as a case, with the intervention of the framework of analysis, shows the repressive arm of the state and it is explicable in Marxian, Gramscian and Althusserian terms. Ultimately, now that the principal contradictions that inform the contradictions between state and civil society have been unpacked and the managing of these contradictions through certain institutions (ISA and RSA) it is important to proceed to unpack whether UWC #FMF had a counter hegemonic quality.

### **6.5 UWC #FMF: A Case for Counter Hegemony**

The study has throughout concerned itself with building up a bedrock of research, frameworks and analysis that would determine whether a case for understanding the extent of the counter hegemonic qualities within #FMF. The study has used a useful framework from which to assess this, and as such will here make final extrapolations in answering the principal research question of this study; to what extent was #FMF UWC a counter-hegemonic force?

After having foregrounded the hegemony of the state and the hegemonic notions surrounding access to higher education, here the study shows how #FMF, at UWC in particular, acted as a counter-weight to that. In this way, it will show clearly the extent of UWC #FMF's counter-hegemonic quality.

#### **6.5.1 Hegemonic Notions vs. UWC #FMF agenda**

The study noted the need to narrow its analysis to specific periods, institutions and moments to satisfy a thorough assessment of hegemony. Therefore, the analysis of the media, the university,

the police service and the judiciary, the study has identified two parallel processes that exist. The hegemonic notions, whether reinforced by individuals or institutions and then there is the #FMF agenda, whether informed by its leaders or the actions of its members. Hence, a fair way to assess counter hegemony would be to understand to what extent #FMF has operated outside of what would be considered the hegemonic boundaries. In this way it is possible to make a case for counter hegemony.

As noted in the theory, Gramsci alludes to the intricacies of domination. Anderson (1976: 6) adds to this by noting that “for Gramsci, a class cannot dominate in modern conditions by merely advancing its own narrow economic interests; neither can it dominate purely through force and coercion. Rather, it must exert intellectual and moral leadership, and make alliances and compromises with a variety of forces”. The idea that hegemonic notions are not purely sustained or arrived at through violent means, but need ideological means holds true in the case of UWC #FMF. The university allowed for protests to go on for about a week before instituting processes of an interdict, after attempts to deflate #FMF both at UWC and nationally had failed. The no fee increment concession can also be seen as a compromise made in order to avoid further protests which had the potential to hurt the status quo. I refer to the interdict here as it brings together all the apparatuses examined in this study. The university through the judiciary seek an interdict, which when granted is enforced by the police. The instructive nature of the interdict allows police to manage the protests by any means necessary. Hence, there is an unwitting coming together of the apparatuses of the state in defense of state control and hegemony. Hence, for Gramsci there is a reliance on the process of manufacturing consent, to avoid clear unconcealed coercion as it holds potential of sparking contestation.

Thus, for all of these apparatuses of the state to be activated and work in what looks to be in sync, it means that there truly existed a dichotomy between hegemonic notions and the #FMF agenda. Moreover, the media's two-tiered reporting on #FMF, the UWC's shift in managing protests, the punitive nature of the judiciary and the insistence by UWC #FMF to continue denote that there is a considerable counter-hegemonic quality within UWC #FMF. Albeit operating within the logic of the state- using the right to protest, the university setting, the constitutional clause on access to higher education- UWC #FMF challenges the ideas that the state can offer a good, fail to deliver it and negotiate by making menial compromises as a way out of delivery. Also, UWC #FMF by refusing the concession, and engaging in combative ways of forcing the university and the state, shows that its agenda was a threat to hegemonic common sense values and as such the activation of the repressive apparatus.



### 6.5.2 Counter-Hegemony in Practice

There are moments found in the data that directly speak to the actions of UWC #FMF being counter-hegemonic. In some of these instances these moments are not as successful as perhaps envisaged, but the study judges them more on the objectives rather than the outcome. However, it is important to engage with the outcomes of the moments as well because they help answer what this study contends with.

When speaking to the Student Governance Manager, Mr. Mdepa, he cited how in many ways UWC #FMF challenged the normal ways of engaging issues at UWC. He cites his discomfort with some of the techniques employed by UWC #FMF in its quest to get its demands met. He further notes the disruptive effect of UWC #FMF when he says “the operations of the university were constrained. We could not access venues to have assessments carried out, health care facilities were shut down, the whole place was at a stand-still” (Interview with Mr. Mdepa, 2018). Mr.

Mdepa's response shows just how UWC #FMF was determined to get their demands met at a very high cost. This is because in the process to gain a victory that would benefit all students, they had to sacrifice those very students – albeit momentarily – to get what they want. The 'marathon meeting' as cited in the findings can be seen as another attempt at manufacturing consent. The outcome of the meeting that took more than 7 hours was a very contentious one, as deduced from the Facebook update of UWC #FMF. The said meeting came back with a lot of commitments to commissions and task teams to tackle the issues raised, and as expected angered the students (Outcome of Meeting between UWC Management, SRC and #FMF). Normally, in student protests on the UWC campus in particular it usually takes one meeting to regain normalcy. However, with the #FMF experience it was different. The leaders were told by the masses to take back that agreement and restart negotiations. This showed how the counter-hegemonic quality of UWC #FMF is not merely measured against the university, but also within the movement itself in relation to power structures and decision making. This again shows a very fluid sense of organization and strategy, which is informed by the radical alternative formation that #FMF is.

Dr. Leuscher mentions that one of the other significant things about #FMF was that it “sparked a lot of solidarities among the student body and other allies, which had not been seen for a long time” (Interview with Dr. Leuscher, 2018). This shows how #FMF acted as a fresh voice in the terrain of student activism. The voice might not be new, as Dr. Leuscher alludes, but it is fresh and opened possibilities that were dead or never been seen. This illustrates how the movement pushed boundaries, defied narrow organization along party lines in order to make a greater impact that would benefit students. This is important because there were signs of attempts to divide the movement along traditional narrow party affiliation. I recall SASCO National Executive Committee releasing a statement which urged all branches to refrain from engaging in #FMF,

which was followed by some branches, including UWC. However, some institutions stayed resolute and were strengthened by these efforts. The analysis, using the tools developed in chapter three, demonstrate the nuanced nature in which we should view hegemony and counter-hegemony. Also, it makes it difficult to answer the question without any qualifications. Hence, the study will conclude by summarizing all its work and providing a fitting answer to the research questions.



## Conclusion

### 7.1 Answering the Question

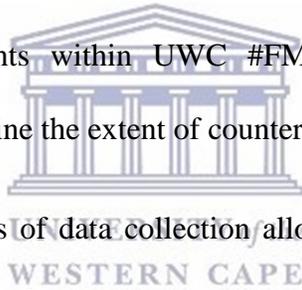
This section brings the different parts of the whole study together in answering the main question. Along with concluding remarks, the section will also provide a final engagement in relation to the research question. This will be achieved by drawing on the background, introduction, the situating of the study, the framework of analysis, methods employed, data gathered and the analysis of such data to answer the ultimate research question of this study; to what extent and whether #FMF has counter-hegemonic quality, using the UWC experience as a case.

The study was set up by the first chapter by drawing on the history of the South African student movement and its struggles for free education. The international student movement was partially engaged in an effort to understand the genealogy of students within the university. The first chapter also engaged with the problem raised by this research which is the low numbers of students who have access to higher education despite constitutional guarantees to do otherwise. The background laid a foundation for the unpacking of the context of the study.

In chapter two the context of the study acted as a further expounded on the problem in order to situate the inquiry. The context chapter helps situate the study in order to go into the framework of analysis and research methods quite freely.

Chapter three was dedicated to the development of a thorough framework for analysis. The point was to carefully select theory which would be tested against the data and give the necessary explanatory power for the problem. The theory consists of Gramsci's consent and coercion and Althusser's more direct understanding of the two in the form of ideological state apparatus and repressive state apparatus. The framework of analysis might be derived from scholars who wrote a long time ago, but the relevance and explanatory power allows it to be a usable tool to deal with

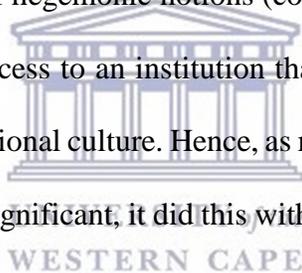
the study's questions. The set up was to understand Gramsci's notion of hegemony by unpacking his use of consent and coercion to explain the state's behavior in maintaining dominance. Then to look at liberal democratic theory for its importance in understanding constitutional democracy, however noting how it falls short in explaining the contradictions that arise from such a society. As such, the framework moved to using Althusser's explication of the ISA and RSA as a direct way of showing in what practical ways the state manages its relations with civil society. The framework analysis, is also supported by a fairly thorough research method. The study uses auto-ethnography which draws from the experiences of the author, while engaging with over ten other interviewees, YouTube videos, economic statistics, media statements, media articles and speeches in attempts to triangulate the data. As such, against the data the theory has proven capable of showing counter-hegemonic elements within UWC #FMF. By successfully outlining the hegemonic it makes it easier to examine the extent of counter hegemony.



Moving to the findings, the methods of data collection allowed for rich findings which when viewed against the theory show signs of notable counter-hegemonic qualities in #FMF. I concede that the study could have engaged with more officials from the state, however, the issues of proximity and sensitivity of the topic hindered such. This limitation however does not take away from the data collected from other valuable sources. Instead, for future research there could be an engagement with a broader audience of respondents to test the veracity of the theory and answer the question more comprehensively. Finally, as explicated in the analysis chapter this study finds that UWC #FMF has got significant counter-hegemonic quality. It challenges common sense notions around access to higher education. It uses tactics and strategies that go against the norm, it challenges formal bureaucratic norms which hinder it from operating with freedom under the SRC in the university. It shuts down a university, in demanding for access to more. It disrupts

examinations, the most sacred occasion after graduation at any university. It refuses concessions on the basis of ‘no compromise’. It moves from protest to resistance as it engages the police in combat form. It develops a league of cadres who get arrested, released and return to the picket line. It uses social media as a counter-weight to traditional media. All these elements, found in Gramscian thought, show significant signs of counter-hegemony as they are directly aimed at hegemonic notions or institutions.

Nonetheless, informed by the parameters as set out by this study in its initial conception, the point was never to declare #FMF counter-hegemonic, but to find out the extent. As such, the final answer is that UWC #FMF was not completely counter-hegemonic, in terms laid out by the theory. As it operated leaning on the framework of hegemonic notions (constitution) to wage its battle for free education. It also fought for more access to an institution that it concedes reinforces hegemonic notions through curricular and institutional culture. Hence, as much as UWC #FMF espoused some sort of counter-hegemony, which is significant, it did this within the parameters of the hegemonic.



Needless to say, hegemonic notions prevailed as two years down the line it is as if the protests did not happen. Although the former President, Jacob Zuma, announced free education for the poor – with its own implementation challenges – there is a return to ‘normalcy’ which has swept any talk of decolonization or free education under the rug. For instance, I am now employed and outside the realm of student activism, so are many other activists of the movement. As Dr. Leuscher puts it “student activists come and go, like you are now a Master’s student who says you are no longer on the ground”. He demonstrates how the nature of universities do not allow for long term service by activists, and as such the loss of institutional memory takes a knock on momentum as well.

Moreover, the phasing out of activists, is also a consequence of the principal contradiction raised earlier in this chapter that forces people in this society to sell their labour in order to reproduce themselves. Hence, the hegemonic notions do not only exist in the realm of ideas but also the material reality of even the people who seek to challenge them. Finally, as Marx said “we cannot live in the ideal world in our minds”, and so the hegemonic values, even though it takes punches here and there (#FMF, #Marikana etc.) it rises against that using consent and coercion to maintain its dominance. Hence, the realities that inform the relations between civil society and the state are not incidental, but as a consequence of the logic of hegemonic ideas that reinforce them.



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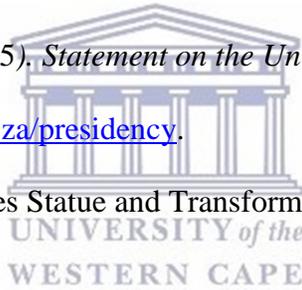
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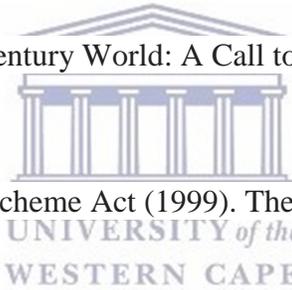
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## 8.2 List of Interviews and Personal Communications

Interview with Unati Sigodi. October 2017. University of the Western Cape, 13H00.

Interview with Wandisile Mdepa. November 2017. University of the Western Cape, 13H00.

Interview with Mxolisi Shange. November 2017. University of the Western Cape, 12H00.

Interview with Participant X. November 2017. Spur Tygervalley Centre, 17H00.

Interview with Philasande Manyala. November 2017. University of the Western Cape. 13H00

Interview with Prof Cheryl Africa. January 2018. University of the Western Cape. 13H00.

Interview with Marquard Simpson. February 2018. University of the Western Cape. 14H20.

Interview with Dr. Thierry Leuscher. February 2018. Human Sciences Research Council. 09H00.

Interview with Mangaliso Nompula. April 2018. University of the Western Cape. 12H00.

Interview with Palesa Mchopela. April 2018. University of the Western Cape. 13H00

Interview with Participant Y. May 2018. Cape Peninsula University of Technology. 17H00.

Interview with Zamantungwa Khumalo. May 2018. University of the Western Cape. 13H00

Interview with Samkelo Ndwandwa. May 2018. University of the Western Cape. 09H00

Personal Communication with Lethukuthula Ntombela. May 2018.

Personal Communication with Thembile Ndwandwa. May 2018.

## APPENDICES

**Ethical Clearance**

**Permission to Conduct Research at UWC**





OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535  
South Africa  
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10 August 2017

Mr L Mandyoli  
Political Studies  
**Faculty of Economic and Management Science**

**Ethics Reference Number:** HS/17/5/35

**Project Title:** An investigation of the "FeesMustFall movement as a counter-hegemonic force: A case of the UWC experience.

**Approval Period:** 08 August 2017 – 08 August 2018

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval. Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Josias', is placed over a white rectangular box.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

**PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049**



10 August 2017

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

**Name of Researcher** : Lindokuhle Mandyoli  
**Research Topic** : An investigation of #FeesMustFall as a counter-hegemonic force  
**Date of issue** : 10/08/2017  
**Reference number** : UWCRP100817LM

As per your request, we acknowledge that you have obtained the necessary permissions and ethics clearances and are welcome to conduct your research as outlined in your proposal and communication with us.

Please note that while we give permission to conduct such research (i.e. interviews and surveys) staff and students at this University are not compelled to participate and may decline to participate should they wish to.

Should you wish to make use of or reference to the University's name, spaces, identity, etc. in any publication/s, you must first furnish the University with a copy of the proposed publication/s so that the University can verify and grant permission for such publication/s to be made publicly available.

Should you require any assistance in conducting your research in regards to access to student contact information please do let us know so that we can facilitate where possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Shaikjee".

DR AHMED SHAIKJEE  
DEPUTY REGISTRAR: ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

UWCRP100817LM