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A platform to protest: A virtual ethnography of the UWC Fees WILL Fall  
Linguistic Landscape.

by

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*A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of*

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## Keywords

University of the Western Cape

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Multimodal

Resemiotization

Remediation



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# **A platform to protest: A virtual ethnography of the UWC Fees WILL Fall Linguistic Landscape.**

C.F Oliver

Magister Artium

## **Abstract**

The year 2015 and 2016 marked a period of heightened turmoil for the universities in the Western Cape. The three leading institutions in the province were each affected by student-led protest during that year. The Rhodes Must Fall Campaign occurred at the University of Cape Town (UCT), followed by Luister at Stellenbosch University (SU) and later the Fees Must Fall Campaign happened at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Of the three universities, UWC was the most affected by the student-led protest in the province. Aside from the financial costs incurred by the physical damages to the university, the effects of the movement also lead to the extended shutdown of UWC in 2015 and again in 2016. The movement did not only manifest in the physical space with students marching and holding rallies on campus, but it also created an online presence for the organization. The UWC Fees Must Fall movement established themselves as UWC Fees WILL Fall (UWC FWF) after their inception online. UWC FWF used the Social Networking Sites (SNS), Facebook as their chosen platform to engage with students. Therefore, this study employs a virtual linguistic ethnography approach in combination with notions of multimodality, resemiotization and remediation as repurposing. The study examines how the UWC Fees WILL Fall protesters used the features of Facebook in the construction of their online identity as well as engaged with their followers. The findings reveal that UWC FWF re-used the introduction features of Facebook, namely the Username, Profile picture and Cover photo, to construct their online identity. The UWC FWF identity is not fixed but changes with the evolution of the protest. The identity of the organization moves from anonymous to an identity that challenges the identity of UWC. This contradicting identity is maintained in the construction of the UWC FWF online community. An imagined community is created on Facebook that reinforces the identity of peaceful agents for change cause. The study also reveals the connection between UWC FWF and UWC through the exploration of unresolved past issues that have been continued in the present. The study adds to a deeper understanding of the role of the virtual linguistic landscape in the construction of a protest. It shows how multimodal tools such as resemiotization and remediation as repurposing are applied to the features of an online platform. Therefore, the study not only contributes to

explicating the effects and the relationship between virtual landscape and the physical landscape, but also helps in the development of social semiotic theory of multimodality by adding resemiotization and remediation as tools of analysis.



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## Declaration

I declare that *A platform to protest: A virtual ethnography of the UWC Fees WILL Fall Linguistic Landscape* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before, for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Candice Frances Oliver

2314824

Signed...



..... Date: **December 2019** .....



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Great is Thy Faithfulness, Oh Lord (Lamentations 3:23)

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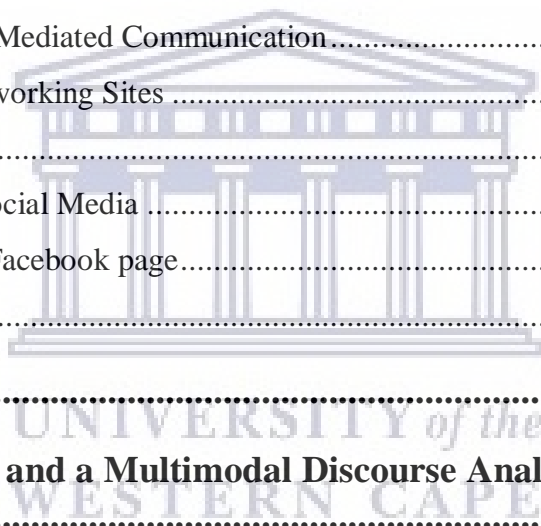
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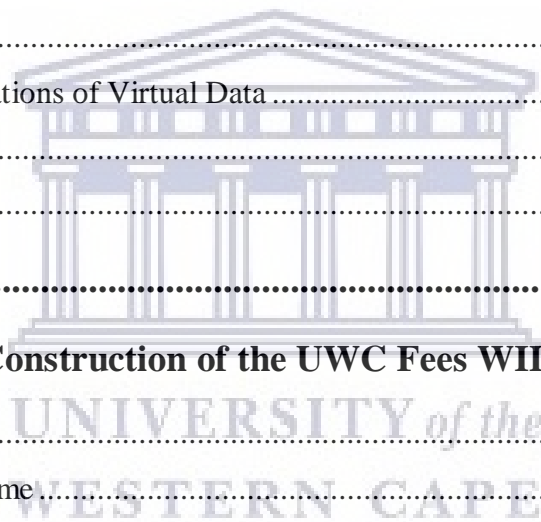
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.0. Introduction

South Africa is well-known for its decades of apartheid, but with the first democratic elections in 1994, much has changed. Notwithstanding many positive strides, there has been an upsurge in protest in the first two decades of South Africa's young democracy. What can be discussed as the start of the 'fallism era' can perhaps better be summed up as the start of a mediatized period of protest in South Africa.

In the years 2015 and 2016, there have been student-led protests at various universities across South Africa. While these protests have had devastating effects on the physical landscape of the universities themselves, their presence was not restricted to the physical spaces but extended to the virtual platforms used by students.

Among the universities that were affected by the student-led protests, this study focuses on the Fees Must Fall protest, as it played out, at the University of the Western Cape. It examines how the protests emerged, continued and thrived online. The researcher employs a virtual linguistic ethnography approach of the social media platform used by students during the protests, specifically Facebook.

This chapter provides a large historical contextualization of struggle, protest, and conflict in South Africa. In order to appreciate the decoloniality paradigm within which contemporary protests arguably emanate, I begin with an introduction to the period of enslavement and coloniality which prefaced later legislation of apartheid. The chapter continues with the history of universities in South Africa, with a focus on the universities in the Province of the Western Cape. Providing a historical background about the universities in the Western Cape shapes the understanding of the history and landscape of the University of the Western Cape, the institution at which this study took place. The chapter outlines the three student-led movements in the Western Cape in 2015, namely Rhodes Must Fall, Luister and Fees Must Fall, and introduces the protest movements at the center of this study, namely Fees Must Fall at UWC that became UWC Fees WILL Fall (henceforth UWC FWF) and outsourcing and the End Outsourcing protest.

Thereafter, the chapter provides the statement of the problem, research aim, objectives and research questions, followed by the research hypothesis, scope of study and the significance of the study. Lastly an outline of the chapters is provided.

### **1.1. Slavery**

Miers (2003:2) provides a definition that encompasses the most severe and historical form of slavery known as chattel slavery,

“A chattel slave is normally defined as someone under the complete domination of an owner who has powers of life and death over him or her, can sell and transfer him at will and has full control over his daily and domestic life including his progeny”.

In 1924, the League of Nations' Temporary Slavery Commission produced a definition of slavery aiming to include all forms of slavery. They defined slavery as the “status of a person over whom any or all of the powers of ownership” (Miers , 2003:11) were exercised. They listed among ‘all its forms’ chattel slavery, domestic slavery (slaves born in their owner’s household), serfdom, debt bondage, forced marriage, the adoption of children to exploit them, and forced labour (Miers, 2003:12). The above definition of slavery was modified by the supplementary Slavery Convention of 1956 to include “the slavery-like practices of apartheid and colonialism” (Miers, 2003:13). The United Nations stated that “collective” slavery “was applied to persons suffering extreme discrimination, such as Africans in South Africa in the days of apartheid” (Miers, 2003:9).

Slavery was introduced to South Africa along with colonialism in 1652. Slaves were brought to the Cape and then transported across South Africa between 1653 and 1822, changing the landscape with its colonial influence of forced labour (South African History Online, History of slavery and early colonisation in South Africa, 2011). In the 400 years of the slave trade, many people from across Africa were captured and traded as slaves. Europeans also introduced a bartering system with African rulers, trading firearms in exchange for people, who ultimately became slaves. The earliest form of slavery is traced back to Jan van Riebeeck in 1652. After failed negotiations with the local Cape population for cattle and labour, he enslaved them to

work on his land. Jan van Riebeeck started cattle and crop farms in the Cape to supply the Dutch ships that stopped in Cape Town (South African History Online, History of slavery and early colonisation in South Africa, 2011). As the farms increased productivity and revenue, so did the need for labour and slaves were imported from other countries, such as Angola, Senegal and Madagascar, to the Cape.

The first classification of a slave was by race, “slaves were black and slave owners were white” (South African History Online, History of slavery and early colonisation in South Africa, 2011). The definition of a slave was that a slave was property, owned by another human being. As property, slaves could be bought, sold, bequeathed and used as security for loans. The Dutch East Indian Company implemented laws to govern the slaves and maintain control over them. The laws allowed slave owners to whip, increase working hours and withhold food as forms of punishment for running away and disobeying orders. The Settlers also imposed their language and religion onto the slaves, teaching them to speak Dutch and English and teaching them Christianity (South African History Online, History of slavery and early colonisation in South Africa, 2011). Notwithstanding the fact that slavery was abolished in 1838, it is logical to assume that this period smoothed the path for racist rhetoric which undergird and gave power to the architects and benefactors of apartheid.

## **1.2. Apartheid**

In 1948, the National Party (NP) government introduced the apartheid ideology in South Africa. Apartheid, meaning apartness, in Afrikaans, was implemented as a system that separated people by their racial groups in South Africa (South African History Online, 2016). The apartheid law enforced racial separation in every possible aspect. People of different racial groups had to live and develop separately, resulting in inequality for the racial groups that were non-white. The law prohibited inter-racial marriages, restricted access to places, land access and other forms of integration. The apartheid law disadvantaged many South Africans because they were non-white, which was the racial classification of the people of the ruling party. Apartheid also maintained the separation of racial groups by ensuring non-whites remained at poverty level. Harsh punishment was the result of breaking the apartheid laws and the resistance of apartheid (South African History Online, 2016).

A few of the laws around which apartheid was structured was the Population Registration Act, 1950. All South Africans were classified and registered with Home Affairs according to their racial group. Group Areas Act, 1950 (South African History Online, 2016). This act enforced the physical separation of people and dictated which racial group may or may not live in designated urban spaces in South Africa. This law also resulted in the forced removals from District 6 in Cape Town (Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act, 1959). This Act said that different racial groups had to live in different areas. The non-white areas were located outside of towns away from the white racial group. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 1949, the Immorality Amendment Act, 1950 and the Separate Representation of Voters Act, 1951 were also introduced in an attempt to further segregate people (South African History Online, 2016).

The education system in South Africa was also governed by apartheid laws. As previously stated, the universities in South Africa were divided according to race. Universities were initially intended for white students only. In the Western Cape, UCT and Stellenbosch University were for whites only and UWC was for coloured people. The options and quality of education were also different as detailed in the history of UWC. Coloured students were offered a limited number of options compared to those offered at white universities, this separation shaped the history of UWC.

For example, the SRC affiliated themselves with black consciousness-inspired South African Student Organisation (SASO) in exercising their constitution to affiliate with national and international student organisations (Lalu, 2012). This created tension between university administration and students. The students responded with the following statement: ‘in a university situation there is no place for restrictive and negative “disciplinary measures” and attitudes since they deny the freedom which are the basis of healthy physical and intellectual development’ (VWC, 66).

The students later submitted a memorandum with the following list of grievances:

- i. Restrictions in the hostels,
- ii. Strict dress codes for students
- iii. The conditions in the library
- iv. Regulations relating to sporting activities
- v. Authoritarianism that prevailed amongst administrators

- vi. State of the bookshop
  - vii. Conditions of the toilets on campus
  - viii. Demanding more a representative staff and a black rector
  - ix. An equalisation of the salaries of the white and black employees of the university
- (VWC, 65)

These grievances were rejected by the university leadership.

The year 1973 proved to be the year of heightened student-led protests at UWC (Lalu, 2012). The chain of conflict events that rolled over from previous years started 1973 off with the rejection of the newly appointed Rector Professor C.J. Kriel. The students demanded the university appoint a black Rector. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1973, the Cape Times published a picture of the protests that was taking place after the appointment of the new Rector (Lalu, 2012).

### **1.3. Decoloniality – post 1994**

Colonialism refers to established patterns of power that govern culture, knowledge production, labour and intersubjectivity relations (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). In South Africa, coloniality was centered on race in determining the hierarchical positioning of human beings to maintain power relations within a society and extends to global power relations. A paradigm of resistance was developed to counteract the impact of coloniality, where decoloniality aims to reshape the asymmetrical power relations and racial hierarchization enforced by coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). We see decoloniality as “the dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007 as cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015:488)

Moreover decoloniality aims to unveil, expose, and publicize the hidden side of coloniality that co-exists with the ornateness of equality, liberty, progress and fraternity in modern society and “... speaks to the deepening and widening of decolonization movements in those spaces that



experienced the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neocolonialism, and underdevelopment” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015:48). The overarching point of decoloniality is then to transform a former colonialized society, like Africa, India and Asia, through changing the political, institutional and economic discourses and materialize the paradigms free and liberal state of existence. The paradigm strives to create a world where African languages, histories, cultures, art and traditions are practiced and celebrated without resistance in the form of racialization, violence, discrimination, indifference and marginalization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2012) add that an important facet of decoloniality is the restoration of indigenous identities. Communities and individuals are shaped by their indigenous knowledge to the degree that it cannot be defined or codified, highlighting the importance of decoloniality for these entities. Decoloniality is significant for the amendment and reformation of an interrupted and failed history. It is the catalyst into reimagining, rearticulating and resurging power, knowledge and change through the multiplicity of axiologies, epistemologies and ontologies (Sium *et al.*, 2012). It is within this highly conscious context that the fallist era came into being.

#### **1.4. Universities in South Africa**

The South African universities were defined by the apartheid policy between 1948 and 1990 (Moodie, 1994). Barnes (2006:150) explains that the policy aimed to create restriction on higher education for black students by allowing them to study only a small option of courses that were “racially determined division of labour”. In 1959 the University Education Act of 1957 was reviewed and extended to maintain the division of white and black students in higher education (Moodie, 1994). The purpose of the bill was firstly to deny black students the right and opportunity to study at white institutions and secondly to create universities only for black students that were closely administered by the government (Moodie, 1994).

The government created clear differentiation between institutions. The institutions for the white students offered a full range of educational services, this was to ensure the continuation and growth of white privilege (Barnes, 2006). These types of institutions were termed historically advantaged institutions (HAIs). The following universities were HAIs: Cape Town, Witwatersrand, Stellenbosch, Rhodes, Natal and Pretoria; the Witwatersrand, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth technikons were also included (Barnes, 2006). The institutions that were created for coloured, Indian and black students were known as historically disadvantaged institutions

(HDIs). By 1994, South Africa had 17 HAIs (including technikons) and 17 HDIs (including technikons). The University of the Western Cape was one of the HDIs (Barnes, 2006).

Besides the University of the Western Cape, there are two other universities in the region, specifically University of Cape Town and University of Stellenbosch. Notably both of these universities are HAIs and suffered much less structural damage (and arguably branding-damage), than UWC during the recent student-led protests that occur at each of these universities during 2015 and 2016. These universities also have very different historical backgrounds and also differ in terms of socio economic status and language use. As UWC experienced the most structural damage of all the universities in the country and considering its very own leftist history, the ebullience of the FMF campaign at the University of the Western Cape may appear somewhat paradoxical at first. To further appreciate this incongruity, the historical makings of the university itself is provided below.

### **1.5. Historical Background of the University of the Western Cape**

The University of the Western Cape was first established as a college in 1906. The college was created for coloured students as a branch of the University of South Africa (University of the Western Cape, 2016). The purpose of the college was to offer higher education in limited fields of study to the racially oppressed group in South Africa (University of the Western Cape, 2016). UWC gained its university status in 1970 and was able to award its students diplomas and degrees. The university ‘has a history of creative struggle against oppression, discrimination and disadvantage.’ This institution has been in the forefront of creating change among academic institutions and has been a key player in building a dynamic and equitable nation (University of the Western Cape, 2016).

Unsurprisingly, (student) protest is not a new phenomena at UWC, with past students quite active in voicing their struggles against unfair treatment by the government during apartheid. In 1971 the students at the University of the Western Cape formulated a university constitution that challenged the Extension of the Universities Act of 1959 (Lalu, 2012). This act was upheld by UWC and constituted the rules the student had to follow. The Act claimed to provide access to tertiary education to everyone with limitations of the racial segregation law, meaning that students of colour could only attend a university that was created for people who were non-white and were not allowed to attend a university for whites only (HAI), UWC was the

institution that was established, in the Western Cape, for coloured students who were not allowed to attend HAIs such as UCT and SU (Lalu, 2012). The Student Representative Council (SRC) drafted a constitution for the students, it included national and international affiliation to student organizations and the right to conduct mass meetings, surveys and referenda guaranteed. This matter was contested in the High Court by the university administration as they disagreed with the SRC's constitution and did not see the need for a change. The court ruled in favour of the university administration. This was the start of student-led protest, which ultimately effected change, at the university, in the 1970s (Lalu, 2012).

On 5 June 1973 the SRC again submitted a list of grievances to the Rector. The grievances listed many of the same issues raised in the previous list of grievances. Students emphasized the seriousness of the issues raised and their intent for change at the university (Lalu, 2012). The students were not only challenging the access policy of the university but were also now questioning the quality of the content. They wanted the university to engage in conversation about the issues students were experiencing at the university but also as people of colour in South Africa (Lalu, 2012). The students proposed a new access policy that was not dependent on race and they called for a higher quality of academic content.

The university management disagreed with the students demands and “felt that all courses were based on universally accepted principles”. This enforced the idea that “UWC was not an instrument of control but,....., one that would ensure that the racialised subject which the university aimed to constitute would be kept in its place” (Lalu, 2012:47). This intensified the protests and led to shutdown of UWC by the government as a means to end the protests on campus. The protests and exchanges between students and university administration led to the creation of a judicial commission of enquiry into student-led protest at UWC, presided over by Judge President of the Cape of Good Hope Provincial Division, Jacques Theodore van Wyk and instituted on 10 August 1973 (Lalu, 2012).

The first black rector, Professor Richard E van der Ross was appointed in 1975 after this occurred after a period of protest action by students and staff demanding a freer climate at UWC (University of the Western Cape, 2016). The call for change continued in the 1980s when students opposed the apartheid laws that governed their access to higher education. Students demanded open access to university and objected to the racial and ethnic laws that limited their access to university. Students asked for transformation at the university and in 1982 the UWC

mission statement made a new commitment to being an institution that promotes anti-racism and pledged to the development of underprivileged communities in South Africa.

In 1983, the University of the Western Cape was awarded with the same independent status as other “white” institutions in South Africa (University of the Western Cape, 2016). In 1987, at the “intellectual home of the left”, Prof Jakes Gerwel readdressed policy and social issues that were previously ignored. The open admissions policy was formalized giving hundreds of black student’s access to higher education. Despite the challenges they faced, a large number of these students graduated from the university, starting their roles in the professional sector in the new South Africa. UWC’s primary aim for the future is to build a dynamic and equitable society, reinstalling hope for the future. The university aims to be “an agent of change”. They remain committed to producing, conserving and publishing knowledge that is a significant factor in the transformation of society (University of the Western Cape, 2016).

It is clear that student protest, demands and calls for change has been experienced by the university prior to the 2015-2016 protest. Parallels between this apartheid-catalysed protest and the recent protests are discussed in later chapters.

## **1.6. Sketching the Physical Landscape of the University of the Western Cape**

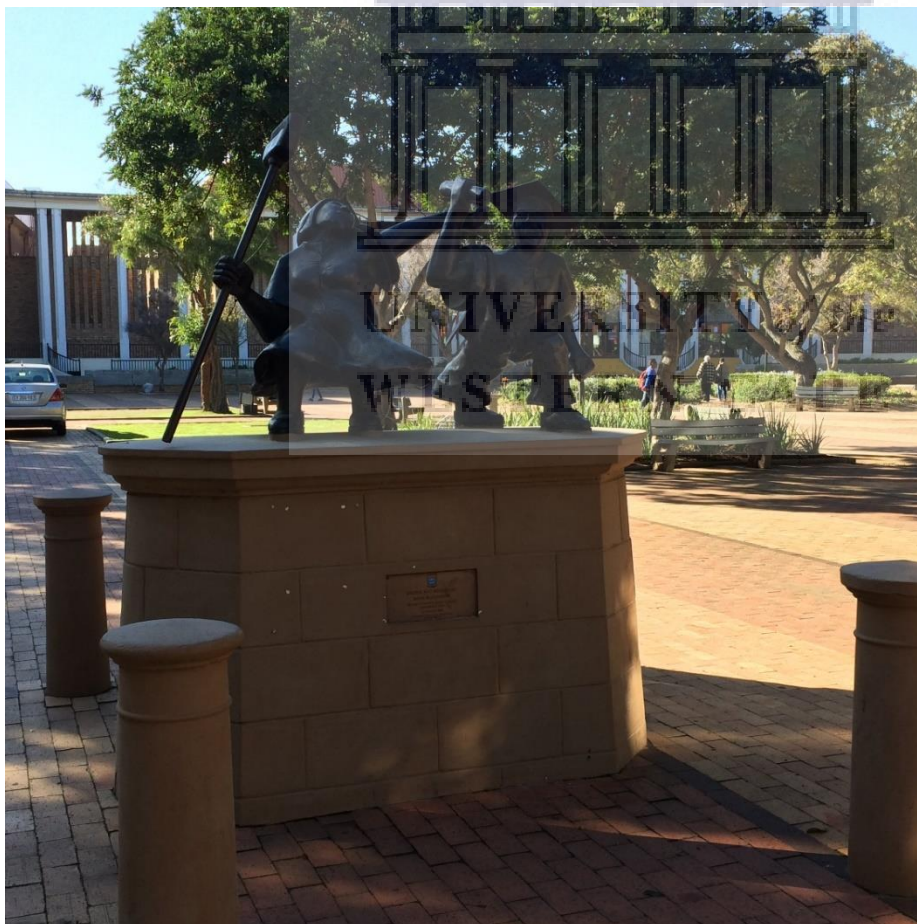
The University of the Western Cape has a history of being a site of struggle. Its landscape has been part of many turmoil events such as the student protests in the 1970’s and the 1980’s. Many of its alumni have been part of the political struggle against apartheid in South Africa, such as Jakes Gerwel and Desmond Tutu. Intriguingly, the university’s landscape does not house any monuments in ode to any of the heroes and visionaries that have shaped the history of this university or attributed to the history of this country. Unlike Stellenbosch university which has erected a statue of JH Marais on the Rooiplein of their campus. The statue was to memorialize JH Marais and commemorate his role in the foundation of the university. “On 2 April 1918, Victoria College became Stellenbosch University thanks to a £100 000 donation by a local benefactor, Mr. Jan Marais of Coetzenburg” and his Victorian residence became the home of Maties sport (Stellenbosch University, 2016). Importantly, he was a racist benefactor, who intended the well-being of white Afrikaners.

The University of Cape Town had a similar approach to memorializing a key figure in the history of the university. UCT is built on land that was donated to the city by Cecil John Rhodes

(University of Cape Town, 2016). A statue of Cecil John Rhodes was once housed on the steps of the upper campus. This statue was a prominent feature of the university's landscape and could be seen from many miles away (South African History Online, Rhodes Statue Removed at UCT, 2015). The statue was removed from the campus on 9 April 2015 after the start of the Rhodes Must Fall student protest (South African History Online, Rhodes Statue Removed at UCT, 2015).

Important to my study, UWC has not completely omitted the incorporation of statues from their landscape, It has a sculpture named the 'Ending and Beginning' on the plain of the campus. The sculpture symbolizes the struggle that has shaped the history of the university and became a featured semiotic artifact in the protest online as shown in the forthcoming analysis chapters.

### 1.6.1 'Ending and Beginning' Sculpture



Unveiled in September 2001, the ‘Ending and Beginning’ sculpture is situated at the entrance of the university and is aptly the first symbolic encounter you have with the university’s history. This award winning sculpture was created by David Hlongwane, a local political artist (Witz, 2012). Through the archways of UWC stands the sculpture that encompasses the oppressed history and liberated future of this struggle university. This sculpture is a regular feature in the university’s promotional material and graduation photos.

The sculpture features “a rural working mother congratulating her recently graduated son as he moves ahead with confidence, eager to meet the challenges awaiting him”, (Award-winning sculpture unveiled in University Square, 2001 as cited in Witz, 2012: 170).

The sculpture has become part of the brand identity of UWC (Witz, 2012: 175). The sculpture is featured in official images such as the website, university brochures and other official correspondence (Witz, 2012). The sculpture also holds an important placement in the landscape as a welcoming feature. The ‘Ending and Beginning’ sculpture has become an official symbol that represents the university’s past, present and future. It must also be noted that this is the only sculpture at UWC. There are no other monuments in the UWC landscape. There are no monuments of political figures that were involved in the history of the university or the history of the country. A detailed analysis of this particular sculpture is provided in Chapter 6.

While the protest occurred on the physical grounds of UWC, it is the manner it was communicated online which this dissertation investigates. For this reason, the second part of this chapter contextualizes the protest under the umbrella of computer mediated communication (CMC).

### **1.7. Student-led Protests in the Western Cape**

The year 2015 was marked by turmoil in the Western Cape. Three of the universities in the province were disrupted by student-led protests that year. Each protest was significant and unique to its university. The protests manifested in the physical space and evolved in the digital space adding a new dimension to the protests. The three protests are chronologically detailed in the section below as it creates a particular unfolding of what I refer to as the Fallist era (see also Hiss and Peck, *etc*)

### **1.7.1. Rhodes Must Fall**

In March 2015 a student-led protest erupted at the University of Cape Town. The protesters called for the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue which at the time was housed on the steps of UCT's upper campus since the establishment of the institution. Cecil John Rhodes was a British Imperialist who made his fortune from mining in South Africa and gifted the city the land on which UCT is built (Nordlinger, 2016). The protesters called their campaign #RhodesMustFall and quickly spread to Twitter, the name aptly related to the removal of the statue (Nordlinger, 2016). The protest started with the vandalism of the statue by students. They then occupied one of the campus buildings from where they started making their demands (Nordlinger, 2016). Notably, the use of human faeces to vandalize the statue ensured much public scrutiny, with conflicting views taken up on nearly every virtual platform. Notwithstanding much public furor the contentious statue was removed one month after the start of the protest.

It became clear that the campaign was rooted in a much deeper issue than the dislike of a statue, students felt the statue was a physical manifestation of the proliferating inequality they experience at the university (Laurore, 2016). The root of the Rhodes Must Fall protest was said to be about the dehumanization of black people and 'a system that privileges whiteness' at UCT, (IOL, 2015). The students were fighting against the 'institutional racism' at the university that continues the marginalizing of the previously disadvantaged students (Laurore, 2016). They argued that UCT was a 'white supremacist space' and that the university was preserving this space, (IOL, 2015). Little did we know that this would be the start of a concatenation of student-led protests across the country.

### **1.7.2. Luister**

In August 2015, a video was released on YouTube, an online video sharing platform, which started the student-led protest at Stellenbosch University. The Luister (meaning 'Listen') documentary tells the story of racial discrimination black students experience at Stellenbosch University (Mbatha, 2015). The video went viral and was discussed with fervour on social media. The video features 32 students and one lecturer, each relating their personal experience of negative race-related incidents at the university and also addresses the language difficulties students were experiencing at this Afrikaans-dominant university (Mbatha, 2015). Historically,

Stellenbosch University was created as an Afrikaans university meant to cater for white Afrikaans specifically (Mabokela, 2000). For this reason the majority of classes are conducted in Afrikaans only with minimal support provided for learners who are not proficient in Afrikaans; this made it difficult for these students to thrive at the university (Mbatha, 2015). One of the documentary creators, Dan Corder, stated that the aim of the documentary “was to give [a] voice to a group that is being stripped of that voice”. To date the video has been viewed 372,042 times on YouTube and received 2930 comments ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)).

### **1.7.3. Fees Must Fall**

In September 2015, the minister for Higher Education and Training, Blade Mzimande, announced a 6 percent increase in higher education fees for 2016 (Phakathi, 2015). The announcement was not well received by higher education students and sparked the start of the Fees Must Fall (henceforth FMF) Campaign across the country. The campaign rejected the planned fees hike. Three days after the ministers’ announcement President Jacob Zuma made a second announcement stating that there will be no fees increase for 2016 (Phakathi, 2015). The FMF campaign changed their aim from lobbying for no fees increase to free decolonized education for higher education students (Badat, 2016). The FMF campaign started at Witwatersrand University and spread to all other universities, reaching the University of the Western Cape in October of 2015.

These student-led protests erupted in aid of the Fees Must Fall Campaign, the protests started as peaceful marches but were soon characterized by mainstream media as “chaotic and violent”. Media reports listed extensive physical damage to buildings and equipment at universities across the country. They reported on fires in the university buildings and damages of the university property. Differences in the various accounts of the protest resulted in my interest in the protest as it was represented and shaped by self-proclaimed university students. For this reason, UWC FMF’s Facebook page is the primary space for data collection.

#### **1.7.3.1. Fees Must Fall at UWC**

Fees Must Fall emerged at UWC as UWC Fees WILL Fall. As the last university in the Western Cape to experience student-led protests, there was clearly a ripple effect taking place with protests spilling over from one university to another university in the province. As discussed previously, many theorize that the #RhodesMustFall at the University of Cape Town acted as



a catalyst for the Fees Must Fall movement, (Maringira & Gukurume, 2017; Meth, 2017). While the #RhodesMustFall protest was specific to UCT and called for the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue, it influenced the students at UWC to voice their grievances and address the issues they were experiencing. Their disapproval of the fees increase led to a call for change, which started the Fees Must Fall protest, (Maringira and Gukurume, 2016). By the end of 2015 the University of the Western Cape was shut down after the Fees WILL Fall (FWF) protests disrupted year end exams. Students and staff were not allowed to enter the campus and an increase in security was present at the university.

Intriguingly, the protest at UWC was not language related, nor incited by racists' statues in the physical environment, but rather seemed to stem from the collective displeasure of the increase of fees as well as outsourcing of cleaning staff at the university. The issues of outsourcing perhaps surprisingly, became an important cause amongst protesting students and it is to this phenomenon that I now turn.

## **1.8. Outsourcing**

### **1.8.1. What is Outsourcing?**

“Outsourcing is the business practice of hiring a party outside a company to perform services and create goods that traditionally were performed in-house by the company’s own employees and staff”, (Kenton, 2018). This practice allows companies to cut costs in a variety of departments such as HR, IT, cleaning service, etc.

Outsourcing was introduced in 1989 as a business strategy and became more popular in the 1990’s, (Kenton, 2018). Outsourcing is widely criticised in many countries for its job loss potential. Those in favour of outsourcing say it allows companies to concentrate on their core design. A decrease in labour costs to company is one of the advantages of outsourcing. A small company can outsource HR or cleaning services without owning the expenses of equipment, technology and overheads, (Kenton, 2018). By outsourcing functions that are not directly related to its core function, companies are able to be more productive and efficient, this allows the company to decrease expenses and increase profits, (Kenton, 2018).

According to Ndelu (2017:19) outsourcing was a practice that continued “re-colonisation and re-enslavement” of disadvantaged and oppressed black workers. This policy exploited and

dehumanised the outsourced workers, creating a new form of apartheid (Ndelu, 2017). At UWC, the jobs of the low income workers such as the cleaning staff, gardeners and security are outsourced. The low income workers are employed by a company that is contracted by UWC for services such as gardening, cleaning and security services. These workers are paid a basic salary of R2700.00 per month with no benefits.

### **1.8.2. Outsourcing Protests at UWC**

At the end of 2015, UWC seemed to be experiencing a domino effect of protests. Shortly after the start of the UWC Fees Must Fall protests, the UWC outsourced workers initiated their protests calling for the end of outsourcing (Abas, 2016). The low income workers at UWC such as the cleaners and gardeners presented their demands to the university. The demands listed below were taken from information gathered on the UWC FWF Facebook page. The protest was featured on the page in the form of posts, which included photos. The featured, photos were taken at End Outsourcing protest events. In these photos, the workers lists their demands on their protest placards. The demands are as follows:

- i. They asked for a salary increase from R2700.00 per month to R10 000.00 per month.
- ii. They wanted to end outsourcing and be directly employed by the university.
- iii. They wanted free tertiary education for their children at the university.
- iv. They wanted free registration for their children.
- v. They wanted free accommodation for their children.
- vi. They demanded the same benefits as the staff who were directly employed by the university.

At the time of the protest, UWC employed “447 grounds, cleaning and security staff” (Maregele, 2016). Facebook posts on the UWC FWF page show the outsourcing staff expressing their unhappiness about the low wage they were being paid and the socioeconomic problems they were experiencing because of a lack of sufficient income. The list of demands illustrated by the outsource workers, during protest events, show that their demands extended beyond themselves to include their children. This shows that the difficulties they are

experiencing do not only affect the outsourced worker but also affects the outsourced workers family. Workers were demanding benefits, such as a study benefit, as many of them stated that they were unable to pay for tertiary education for their children or for themselves (Petersen, 2016). On 1 December 2015, UWC introduced an extra monthly allowance of R2000.00 per outsourced worker and the study benefit was extended to the outsourced workers and their children (Maregele, 2016). The university committed to exploring different options or agreements of the outsource workers terms (Maregele, 2016).

### **1.9. Statement of the Problem**

After the 1994 democratic elections, South Africa became an ostensibly free and equal opportunity country. People of different races were open to mix and the restrictions of Apartheid were lifted. However, many inherent problems of the past remained largely unchanged such as the inadequate distribution of higher education funding (Badat, 2016). The unequal distribution of wealth, remnants of the apartheid legacy and language privilege remained visible in South Africa. With no adequate way of stemming these enduring obstacles, the turmoil experienced during the 2015 and 2016 student-led protest may be seen as a new way of challenging the status quo (Badat, 2016).

The new wave of protests introduced the emergence of the protests online as seen with the Luister video on YouTube in 2015, the #RhodesMustFall hashtags on Twitter in 2015 and UWC Fees WILL Fall on Facebook. This study focuses on the student-led protest at UWC as the protest gained a different life cycle at UWC, with a longer protest period and more shutdown time of the university than those dictated by the national movement. The university was shutdown for extended period in 2015 and 2016 but the protest remained active online. Social Networking Sites (henceforth SNS) were used to counteract the constraints placed on protests in the physical space.

SNS are constantly used and engaged by students, the communication is immediate, effective and cost effective. By using a SNS as a protest platform, the protesters were arguably able to reach their followers and the public. This was undertaken so as to protests without restrictions online. Arguably, SNS still afforded them the opportunity to construct a public protest, similar to the ones they would have had in the physical sphere.

This thesis addresses online protests through analytical tools readily available within the field of Linguistic Landscape studies, specifically tools such as multimodality, resemiotization and remediation.

### **1.10. Research Aim**

The aim of this research is to study the UWC FWF Facebook page and examine how the UWC FWF protest emerged, represented and continued online. Moreover, the study aims to examine how this protest phenomenon on this virtual platform, continued and in some cases contradicted the official identity of the university. A suitable method to analyze an online phenomenon is through a Virtual Linguistic Ethnography (VLE) approach, since the protest was student-led, the online activity plays an important role in the evolution of the protest.

### **1.11. Objectives**

This study is aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the development of the UWC Fees WILL Fall online protest.
2. To employ a virtual linguistic ethnography approach when analyzing varying semiotic materials used in the trajectory of this protest on Facebook.
3. To determine the agency and voice of protesters as part of counter-transformative discourses.
4. To analyze multimodal representations of protests by the UWC FWF.

### **1.12. Research Questions**

1. What identities do these protests draw upon?
2. How are counter narratives of transformation in higher education developed by the UWC online protest?
3. How are varying semiotic materials used in the trajectory of protest?
4. How are agency and voice of the protesters created as counter transformative discourses?
5. What are the counter narratives and identities created on the virtual platform in relation to official identity of the university?

### **1.13. Research Hypothesis**

Although the protest occurred in the physical space, the advantage of working within a virtual space is plentiful for one protest. This study hypothesizes that the virtual space may offer new and exciting ways in which unexpected and non-traditional counter narratives of events can be studied. The protesters represented their campaign skillfully and are able to benefit from their own gatekeeping mechanisms.

### **1.14. Scope of Study**

The scope of this study is limited to the Fees Must Fall protest at UWC and its representation on the UWC Fees Must Fall Facebook page. The researcher considered data from the UWC Fees WILL Fall Facebook page, in the form of posts, cover page, profile pictures and other Facebook features used on the UWC Fees WILL Fall Facebook page. A detailed description of data collection and analysis is provided in Chapter 4.

### **1.15. Significance of Study**

Social Networking Sites have become a significant part of a student's communication repertoire. Students are able to access social networking platforms easily, quickly and it is inexpensive. During the student-led protest at the universities, Facebook formed an integral part of the protest. This study investigated the possibility of a new platform to protest by researching Fees Must Fall at UWC and its portrayal on Facebook. This virtual study is one of the first few of its kind at UWC.

### **1.16. Chapter Outline/ Structure of Thesis**

Chapter One provides the background that shapes the history of the country such as the concepts of slavery, apartheid and decoloniality. The backgrounds of the universities in the Western Cape is provided to shape the understanding of the position of the university in this study. An indepth background of UWC and the landscape is detailed, which is the university

at which the research takes place. The chapter continues with the detailing of the recent, 2015, student-led protests that occurred at the three leading Western Cape universities.

Chapter Two contains existing literature on the research topic. The chapter introduces CMC, followed by SNS and Facebook which is the chosen platform for this study and includes literature relating to Facebook features. This leads to the literature on protests on CMC, on SNS and then the various SNS platforms. Lastly the UWC FWF Facebook page is also discussed.

Chapter Three discusses the theoretical outline of this study which includes Linguistic Landscape, Semiotic Landscape, Virtual Linguistic Landscape, Virtual Linguistic Ethnography Identity, Virtual Identity and Social Semiotic Theory of Multimodality. This chapter also includes theory on Multimodal discourse analysis, Resemiotization, Semiotic Remediation, Remediation, Chronotope and Place as/and Space.

Chapter Four discusses the research design used in the study. It outlines the data collection process which includes the research procedure, research setting and description of data. The chapter concludes with the advantages of virtual data, the limitations of the study and the ethical considerations pertaining to this study.

Chapter Five presents the first set of findings in this study. This chapter is the analysis conducted on the UWC FWF Facebook homepage and the introductory features of the page. The features of Facebook are defined and the re-use of the features by the UWC FWF protesters in the construction of their identity are analyzed.

Chapter Six continues the analysis of the UWC FWF identity in the construction of their community online. The chapter illustrates the multimodal analysis conducted on the use of the features of the page and the participation and information posts published by the organization.

Chapter Seven provides the understanding of the construction of the UWC FWF identity. This chapter explores the remediation of the 'Ending and Beginning' sculpture in order to establish the relationship between UWC FWF and UWC.

Chapter Eight provides the conclusion of the analysis. This chapter includes a summary of the findings that revisits the objectives of the study and concludes with a discussion of the findings.

### **1.17. Summary**

The introduction chapter builds the background of the study, providing a detailed description of the university at which the study was conducted. The chapter outlines the statement of the problem, aims, objectives, research questions, research hypothesis, scope of study and significance of study. The chapter concludes with a brief detail of the description of the chapters in this thesis.



## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.0 Introduction

The literature review focuses on Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Facebook as this is where the primary data of the study concerning the protest abound. The literature pertaining to protests and the role of CMC, SNS and protest images online will be reviewed. A brief background and introduction is provided about UWC FWF as this study was conducted on the online performance of UWC FWF during their protesting period.

#### 2.1 Computer Mediated Communication

This research takes place on Facebook with the data collected within the virtual space. As we shall see communication (albeit posts, videos, images) used for human communication is located within the sphere of Computer Mediated Communication. Specifically,

“Computer-Mediated Communication is a process of human communication via computers, involving people, situated in particular contexts, engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes” (Ferris, 1997, as cited in P.A.R.K & Harada, 2006:4). Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is the overarching term that includes interpersonal and task-related communication conducted by a computer. Fritzpatrick and Donnelly (2010:4) adds to the definition of CMC “as predominantly text-based human–human interaction mediated by networked computers or mobile telephony, which includes, email, asynchronous discussion boards, blogs and wikis”, adding more devices than just computers and more platforms that allow for human-human interaction. Traditional face to face communication is being challenged with the increasing popularity of CMC as a means to communicate. The properties, as noted by P.A.R.K and Harada (2006:4), which make up CMC are:

- i. There is no restriction in geographical, time and space.
- ii. There are limitations on the expression of non-verbal information.
- iii. CMC allows for participants to become nameless
- iv. There is face-to-monitor communication instead of face-to-face communication



- v. The communication is literal instead of the linguistic communication that takes place in the real world
- vi. Information can be reused

## 2.2 Social Networking Sites

boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networking sites as ... “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social networking sites have become popular because they provide users with an online platform for social interaction (boyd & Ellison, 2007). These sites allow for connections between people who otherwise would not have been able to connect. Most people on social networking sites have some degree of offline connection with the people they interact with online. (Haythornthwaite, 2005). According to Steinfeld et al (2009) as cited in Lee *et al.* (2014), interaction on a social networking site allows for the build and maintenance of social capital. Social capital is defined as the results of relationships between people (Coleman 1988, as cited in Lee, Kim, & Ahn, 2014) and arguably is an important component of any successful protest. Putnam (2000) as cited in (Lee, Kim, & Ahn, 2014) adds that social capital can also be defined as the “connections and the associated norms of reciprocity among people”. Before the introduction of social networking sites, social capital was built and maintained through letters, phone calls and face to face interaction (Putnam, 2000 and Williams, 2006 as cited in Lee, Kim, & Ahn, 2014)

There are two types of social capital that occur through human interaction, namely bonding social capital and bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000 as cited in Lee, Kim, & Ahn, 2014). Bonding social capital results from strong-tie relationships, relationships that exists between family and close friends. The people that share bonding social capital share strong emotional, intimate and mutual relations (Granovetter, 1973 as cited in Lee, Kim, & Ahn, 2014). An example of this is the relationship between siblings, cousins and childhood friends. Bridging social capital describes the weak-tie relationships. Bridging social capital refers to distant relationships, these people do not have close social or family ties and often stay in contact for informational reasons (Williams, 2006). Bridging social capital is maintained for practical and

information purposes. An example of a bridging social capital is school friends connecting after a long time, or former work colleagues staying in contact for career reasons (Williams, 2006).

Social networking sites have become a critical tool for maintaining and building bonding and bridging social capital. Bridging social capital is easily acquired as the internet makes it easy for people to join virtual communities (Galston, 1999; Williams, 2006). Strangers can build weak-tie relationships with a large number of people through the use of the internet, broadening their social network. Social capital is often used for social support and economic benefits (Coleman, 1988), the results of social capital also affect an individual's self-esteem, health and life satisfaction (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009; Kim, Subramanian, Gortmaker, & Kawachi, 2006).

What is clear here is that, within the space of CMC are various social networking sites (SNS) which both exist in space, but also constitutes this space. The first social networking site dates back to 1997 with the launch of Six Degrees.com. Asian Avenue followed in 1999, Ryze and Cyworld in 2000 and the addition of Fotolog and Friendster in 2002. Between 2003 and 2006 there was a rapid increase in new social networking sites (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Some of the current favourite social networking sites were launched during this period, Facebook was launch in 2004 and opened to the public in 2006, while YouTube was launched in 2005 and Twitter in 2006 (boyd & Ellison, 2007). In 2016 Facebook was the most popular site in South Africa with 13.5 million users (BusinessTech, 2017). Twitter followed as the second most popular social networking site in South Africa with 7.7 million users that same year. From 2012 to 2016 Facebook remained the most popular social networking site in South Africa with a growth from 6 million users in 2012 (McEndoo, 2016). There were also significant but smaller growths on other platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram. Unsurprisingly, Facebook was the social networking site of choice for the Fees WILL Fall protest at UWC. The age demographic of this site in 2016 featured all the permissible age group using this platform. In 2016, 2.3 million of its users were between the ages of 19 – 22 years old (BusinessTech, 2017). The age group 22 – 26 made up 2.2 million of the Facebook users and 2.7 million Facebook users were between the ages of 31 – 40 years old. It is estimated that 14 million of the 16 million South African Facebook users access this site from their mobile devices. Many South African mobile networks offer free Facebook access to their customers on some of their mobile packages.

The SNS Facebook has been proven as a platform where undergraduate students can maintain bonding and bridging social capital through sustaining both close-tie and weak relationships by using the features of Facebook. Students build a variety of relationships for informational value as a result of bridging social capital and maintain their emotional connections with people whom they have close-tie relationships, for their bonding social capital (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). The purpose of social capital is important to this study as it illustrates the relationship between the author of the UWC FWF Facebook page and the audience of the UWC FWF Facebook page. Social capital is created and maintained through the features that are used on Facebook. This study examines how UWC FWF used the Facebook features for social capital.

### **2.3 Facebook**

Facebook is a social networking site that is used as a communication tool. Facebook users are able to connect and communicate with other Facebook users via this platform (Facebook, 2004). It is a free social networking platform and any person that has an email address can open a Facebook account.

Facebook was started by Mark Zuckerberg and his co-founders Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes in 2004. It started as an online profile for Harvard students only but gradually opened to other universities, colleges and high schools. Towards the end of 2004 Facebook already had one million users. It was opened to the public on 26 September 2006.

Facebook provides its users with a variety of features to use that allows them to communicate with a single user or a public Facebook audience. Facebook users are able to share content such as photos, videos, status updates and website links. Each user has their own Facebook profile which consists of a variety of features. A Facebook profile displays the users name, a profile picture and a cover photo. A profile requires the user to complete the “about” section and share more details about themselves. The “about” section includes a short biography, a list of information about themselves related to their location, place of work, education history, birth date, telephone number, gender, relationship status, family information, life events and their interest. Facebook users interact with each other by becoming “friends” on Facebook. You can either send a friend request or accept a friend request. This enables people to view your “about”

section, photos, videos, status updates, other content shared on your profile and allows them to interact with you.

Facebook allows users to control the privacy settings on their profiles. They are able set their profiles and posts to a public setting which allows anyone to see it or a private setting which allows only their Facebook friends to see it. Content posted by users are seen on a “timeline”. A “timeline” was part of a new design that allowed a more centralized view of posts (Schulman, 2011). Users were now able to scroll down and see content as it loads in a chronological order (Schulman, 2011). In February 2009, Facebook introduced the ‘like’ button which allowed users to like a post they viewed on their timeline. In 2016 this feature was upgraded to reactions that consisted of ‘love’, ‘haha’ (laughing), ‘wow’, ‘sad’ and ‘angry’. In addition to reacting to a post, a user can also comment on a post, status update, photo, video or content that appears on their timeline, the comment feature was one of the early interactive features on this social networking site. These features mirrored the human qualities of engagement. The reaction feature allowed people to show specific but limited emotion. The comment feature allowed people to have a conversation, with one or multiple participants, on this platform.

Apart from having a Facebook profile users are able to start and/or join a Facebook Group or Facebook page. A Facebook Profile differs from a Facebook Group or Page, in that a profile is for an individual and for personal use (Oklahoma Media Group, 2010).

A Facebook Group is similar to discussion forum or message board that allows for more interaction between members (Oklahoma Media Group, 2010). Facebook notes that “Groups and Pages serve different purposes on Facebook. Groups are meant to foster group discussion around a particular topic area while Pages allow entities such as public figures and organizations to broadcast information to their fans. Only the authorized representative of the entity can run a Page” (Facebook, 2004). Facebook allows users with a common interest can share a platform (the Facebook Group) without needing to be friends on Facebook (Oklahoma Media Group, 2010). There are three types of groups that a user can choose from. The first is an open group, information such as the comments and member information is visible to the public but a user cannot interact without joining the group. The second is a closed group, member of the group are visible but other information such as comments can only be seen after joining the group. The third is a secret group, no information about a closed group can be viewed until a user joins the Group. A secret group can only be joined via invitation from a member (Facebook, 2004).

A Facebook page, also referred to as a “Fan Page” and is aimed at for businesses, companies and organizations. Facebook’s official Page definition is “Pages are for organizations, businesses, celebrities, and bands to broadcast great information to fans in an official, public manner. Like profiles, they can be enhanced with applications that help the entity communicate with and engage their fans, and capture new audiences virally through their fans’ recommendations to their friends” (Facebook, 2004). An example of a group that would use a Facebook page would be the UWC Rugby Team, a restaurant or a celebrity.

A Page allows for someone to be a “fan” and not a “friend”, a user has to “like” the page, in order to follow your Page on Facebook (Oklahoma Media Group, 2010). A page also only allows its users to send updates and not message their followers directly. A Page cannot add “fans”, people have to follow the page or have the page suggested to them by friends, in order to follow the page. A Page is able to post status updates, photos, videos and links that “fans” will be able to see on their timeline.

There are two different Page types on Facebook, the Brand and Business Page and the Community or Public Figure Page. Both types of Pages have the same features but differentiate in purpose. In 2010 Facebook allowed users to create an Official Page, which was specifically for official use such as a business or a Community page, which according to Facebook was for a community purpose, e.g. For people who had similar interests. The Community Page has the same look and layout of the other optional pages on Facebook except that if the page becomes popular Facebook will take over the administration of that page (Smith, 2010). Notably UWC FWF emerged as a Community page on Facebook.

	<b>Page</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Closed</b>	<b>Secret</b>
Who can see the profile/group’s name?	Anyone	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see the profile/group description?	Anyone	Anyone	Anyone	Current and former members
Who can see the list of members in the profile/group?	Anyone	People on Facebook	Current members	Current members
Who can see admins and moderators in the profile/group?	Only Members of Admin of the Page	People on Facebook	People on Facebook	Current members

Who can see what members post in the profile/group?	Anyone	Anyone	Current members	Current members
Who can find the profile/group in Facebook search?	Anyone	People on Facebook	People on Facebook	Current members
Who can request to join?	"Like" Page option only	People on Facebook	People on Facebook	Former members

### 2.3.1 Facebook Features

Facebook hosts a range of features that enables users to interact and communicate, such as photo sharing, comment, like, messages and group features. Social capital and the type of social capital is displayed between participants by the use of Facebook features during communication (Haythornthwaite, 2005). Fewer features used indicates a bridging social capital which means the participants have a weak-tie relationship and a larger number of Facebook features used to communicate indicates bonding social capital which means the participants have a strong-tie relationship (Haythornthwaite, 2005). Lee, Kim, & Ahn (2014) suggest that the study of Facebook features provides insight as to how and why people use this social networking site. This theoretical framing forms the framework for the first analysis chapter.

Burke *et al.* (2011) conducted a study illustrating the relationship between social capital and a Facebook users' activity. Three categories illustrated the Facebook features:

- (1) directed communication (i.e., Chat, Comment, Messages, Wall posts, Like and Tag);
- (2) passive consumption (i.e., Reloaded/Read News Feed, Photo, Friends);
- (3) broadcasting (i.e., Status updates, Notes, Photos, Application, Wall).

Directed communication is mostly associated with bonding social capital as the features allow for personal communication. This type of communication illustrates trust as participants are sending personal information and interaction that require responses. Direct communication features such as the 'Chat', 'Message' and 'Tag' feature show a familiarity among participants

and a maintenance of relationship (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011) due to the personal, one-on-one communication relation.

The ‘Chat’, ‘Message’, ‘Like’ and ‘Tag’ features that enable direct communication also allow for interaction between a sender and receiver who are not familiar with each other. Bridging social capital can also be increased through directed communication as sending a message to a Facebook user does initiate the “norms of reciprocity” meaning, that a message sent requires and response (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011).

The ‘Like’ button as a direct communication feature, enables users to express their interest in a post (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011). After the upgrade in 2016, users are also able to express their emotion and affections with the use of the reaction feature, making communication more specified than just a ‘Like’. Lee, Kim, & Ahn (2014) also suggests that the ‘Like’ is sometimes used to maintain relationships regardless of the content. Bonding social capital was higher among users that liked posts more frequently. They also state that users sometimes choose between the two features and choose the ‘Like’ button as it displays “silent emotional support” (Lee et al, 2014). In the study of the UWC FWF Facebook page, the use of the ‘Like’ in response to a post, signifies a tacit agreement with the protesters without any explicit engagement which may have negative consequences.

Passive consumption is exercised with the ‘News Feed’ feature. Facebook users are able to view and read posts, photos, videos and activity of other users on their ‘News Feed’ without engaging in any form of interactive communication (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011). The ‘News Feed’ is where consumption of information takes place.

Broadcasting features such as the ones mentioned above, allow information to be published on Facebook that is not directed at a particular individual (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011). The information is for public consumption of Facebook users. A broadcasting feature is an innovative addition to SNS. The ‘News Feed’ on Facebook, is where these undirected messages are viewed by other Facebook users (Lee et al, 2014). Broadcast messages allows for users to create and consume information, keep in touch with multiple people at the same time and share content such as photos and videos with a wider audience simultaneously. These features have less personal contact than direct communication features and therefore increase bridging social capital due to its lack of relationship maintenance characteristics (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011).

'The Wall' is classified as a broadcasting feature (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011) and was used by Facebook users to publish content that showed expression of self to others. 'The Wall' was also used for social interaction, professional advancement and habitual pass time (Smock *et al.* 2011). An increase in use of this feature indicated an increase in bridging social capital. A "strength of weak ties" is also seen through the engagement of the wall for professional reasons.

The 'Status' and 'Group' feature also forms part of the broadcasting category. Ryan and Xenos (2011) state that active social interaction is shown through the use of the 'Status' feature and passive interaction is shown through the use of the 'Group' feature. The use of the 'Status' feature illustrates more of the bridging social capital than bonding as a 'Status' is visible to all a users' Facebook friends. Facebook friends are often made up of strong-tie and weak-tie connections. 'Groups' are another feature that shows bridging social capital. Users join 'Groups' that represent their interest and affords them the opportunity to interact with other Facebook users that have similar interest (Ryan & Xenos, 2011). As a passive engagement feature, a Facebook user is exposed to all the content published on the 'Group' and is not required to become active to maintain their social connection. It is important to note that once a user or 'Group' posts a status update, it is then referred to as a post, because the users that consumes the 'Status' update will see it on the 'News Feed' among other posted status updates, posted photos and video and other activity content.

Notably this study examines the UWC FWF 'Group' page on Facebook and meticulously examines the features that are used to communicate with their audience.

## **2.4 Protests on Social Media**

There is a growing interest in research on the subject of the role of social media in the organization of protests (e.g., Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013). Research has however not focused on the manner in which SNS are used to aid and enable protests activities with the exception of the following studies; Valenzuela (2013) and Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, (2012). These studies have shown that SNS provides protest organizers with a platform that enables faster and more efficient communication about protest events and news, aiding the organizing of a protest (Jost, et al., 2018).



Social Networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are effective platforms for social interaction. Communication on these platforms develop new connections and maintain established relationships between people. SNS platforms also expose their users to new and existing interests, views and news. This ease of access allows people with shared interests and beliefs to become part of a collective and use the features of these sites to exercise protest behaviour (Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2014). Individuals who are accustomed to the internet and SNS, such as the youth, are more inclined to be part of a group who share their interest, establishing a new form of citizenship (Bennet, 2008).

## **2.5 Protests on Computer-Mediated Communication**

There is growing interest in the relationship between online communication and participation in physical protests (Ayers, 2003; Ayres, 1999; Castells, 2007, 2009; Kavada, 2009 as cited in Mercea, 2011). The assumption is that communication via virtual platforms are harvesting new offline participants (Mercea, 2011). The criticism of the role of online communication in protest participation is that CMC does not facilitate the expansion of participation but rather contributes to the legitimacy of the protest (Diani, 2000; Lusoli & Ward, 2003; Van Laer, 2010).

Mercea (2011) conducted a study researching the new participation possibilities Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) provided unaffiliated participants in protests. Mercea (2011) identified three participatory processes that could be studied through online activity and be linked to offline participation in protests. His study focused on three elements in relation to participation:

- i. Mobilization – participation “in the physical act of protest”
- ii. Identity-Building – participation “in the interpretation of collective action”
- iii. Organizational Transformation – participation “in the organization of collective action”.

The study conducted by Mercea (2011) focused on the digital prefigurative participation. Digital prefigurative participation is defined as the online communication of information or

online communication with individuals prior to a physical protest. In other words, this type of engagement emphasized the beckoning of participants to a protest in the physical space.

This study drew from earlier research that examined the relationships between online activity and protests. The study demonstrated that CMC can be instrumental in the organizing of modern protests (Jenkins, 2011; Zhuo *et al.*, 2011 as cited in Mercea, 2011), as broadcast media has previously been the only form of mass communication for protests (Postmes & Brusting, 2002). The internet has provided Social Movements Organizations (SMO) with a more effective form of mass communication and increased their ability to coordinate a protest event (Ayres, 1999; Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2002 as cited in Mercea, 2011). CMC has allowed for the blurring of lines in traditional political actions (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003) and expanded an organizations “action repertoire” (Van de Donk, Loader, Nixon, & Rucht, 2004). This means that SMO’s were no longer dependant on mainstream media to broadcast their news and information, CMC afforded SMO’s the ability to action their own communication. The internet has afforded SMO’s a more direct contact platform to communicate with followers, surpassing existing time, space and socio-cultural constraints (Castells, 2007; Lievrouw, 2011; Van Laer & van Aelst, 2010).

Despite the apparent success of protests as a result of the inclusion of CMC, Diani (2000) expressed that the use of online communication by an established organization would not necessarily express the increase participants because trustworthy bonds are created through personal communication. While this may be true, online communication would nevertheless make it easier and more efficient to liaise with a large number of people with low social connections. New affiliation, made through personal interaction with a movement, is what increases numbers at a protest event (Pickerill, 2003). CMC can be used to increase the number of long standing members at an event (Van Laer, 2010). According to Postmes and Brunsting (2002), Van Laer (2010) and Lomicky and Hogg (2010) have concluded that the internet is a facilitator for the organization of a protest, as information can be spread quickly and further than traditional communication avenues.

In another study on the use of CMC in the participation of protests by Mercea (2011), we see the difference between low risk protests, epitomized by FânFest protest and high risk protest as seen with Camp for Climate Action. Both protests are discussed in terms of their risk continuum. Firstly, FânFest was seen as low-risk because it combined “activism and recreation” together for one event (Mercea, 2011:158). It was a festival held as an

environmental protest against the largest gold mine in Europe. The festival took place at Rosia Montana in Romania. On the other hand, Camp for Climate Action was deemed as high-risk because it was “aimed at taking direct action against the carbon pollution responsible for global warming” (Mercea, 2011:158). The Camp for Climate Action took place in 2008 at Kingsnorth, a coal-fuelled power station in Kent. The purpose of Climate Camp was to take direct action in support of global warming and against the carbon pollution responsible for it. The FânFest blog and Climate Camp Facebook pages was examined in this study conducted by Mercea (2011).

The findings of this study for a high-risk protest such as Climate Camp, concluded that the use of online communication strengthened the mobilization of the activist because they communicated with friends about the protests via an online platform. People that were not affiliated to an organization did not join a high risk protest, like Climate Camp after engaging in online communication with the organizations online platforms (Mercea, 2011).

The low-risk protests such as FânFest proved to initiate more attendance from unaffiliated participants through CMC (Mercea, 2011). Participants used the internet to gather information about the event and communicate directly with organizers. The online access to organizers, practical information and interaction with other prospective participants seemed enough for unaffiliated participants to join the protest. CMC can therefore be seen as a platform for orientation for the unaffiliated. Unaffiliated participants are able to learn more and educate themselves about an organization before making decisions that affect their offline activity (and safety) (Mercea, 2011).

Notably, the Climate Camp participants that primarily used CMC may have been environmental activists and therefore more comfortable using an online platform in their preparation for another environmental protest (Mercea, 2011). It is therefore possible that this was the contributing factor to the increase in attendance from affiliated participants compared to unaffiliated participants. This also elevated the identity of Climate Camp. Mercea’s (2011) findings supports the argument that organization into activism/involvement and the making of a cause identity may largely depend on direct socializing. The role of digital prefigurative participation through an online platform such as Facebook, has not been answered in the study by Mercea (2011) in terms of maintenance and expansion of an organization. Ultimately, there are many reasons why people would or would not participate in physical protests after online

engagement (Mercea, 2011). The data does not fully index the details of the physical space, but that can be attributed to the nature of the online space.

## 2.6 Protests on Social Networking Sites

Valenzuela *et al.* (2014) added to the research about online communication by looking expressly at the purpose of protest participation. Their study focused on social networking sites, with the hypothesis that “Using Facebook and Twitter regularly increases the likelihood of participating in street protests” and their second hypothesis stating that “Facebook will have a stronger effect on protest participation than Twitter” (Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2014:2047). Their assumption was based on previous research that showed a positive relation between social media usage and protest participation (cf. Macafee & De Simone, 2012; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013; Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2012; Wilson & Dunn, 2011). Social networking sites allow for mass communication therefore enabling organizations to communicate with a larger number of people than previously possible (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Marwell & Oliver, 1993).

Social networking sites enable individuals to continue their offline interest on an online platform, maintaining individual and group identities. This means that people can use SNS to stay informed and up to date with news and information regarding their interests, they do not have to be in a physical place to receive information. The affordance of SNS in this aspect is that their individual and group identity can be transferred without change to an SNS. This is a key feature of protest affiliation. Social Networking Sites also allow for feedback from participants, practice of group norms and peer acceptance (Papacharissi, 2010). These platforms can also fill a number of protest communication requirements: (1) they can act as information hubs, (2) servicing information, (3) events and (4) communication with organizers and other followers (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012). The idea would then be that the greater the access to information, leads to a greater number of engagement with a cause (Kobayashi, Ikeda, & Miyata, 2006).

Boulianne’s (2009) study, based in the United States, questions the amount of influence the internet has on an individual’s decision making to attend a protest. The study by Valenzuela *et al.* (2014), of youths in Chile, is aimed to prove the strong influence the internet has on the decision making process to attend a protest. Additional research studies show that access to

news and online interaction with other participants creates a strong influence from social in press; Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013).

Valenzuela *et al.* (2014) studied the temporal and contextual effects on the social media participation connection. The researchers state that online information is relied on for information acquisition and participation coordination. SNS is most valuable at the beginning and at the end of a protest. At the peak of the protest other communication channels are used such as television, radio, newspapers, etc, taking precedence over SNS. The absence of social media at the peak of a protest is because social media is used for organization, information and importantly mobilization, all of which takes place at the start or end of a protest movement (Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2014). Social media becomes less valuable after issues, demands and rallying of supporters has been established.

Valenzuela *et al.* (2014) concluded that participation by people that use the SNS Facebook and Twitter are 10.8% higher than those who do not use SNS. They found that Facebook features allow for a strong-tie with users, which increases organization mobilization compared to that of Twitter, making Facebook the more effective platform to use for protest activities (Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2014).

## 2.7 Protests on Facebook

There is a dearth of research on how the features of social media is used to encourage protest participation (with the exception of Valenzuela, 2013; Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2012). Lee (2018) expanded on previous research examining the role of Facebook in protest participation and how the use of the SNS, Facebook, translates to participation (e.g., Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013). Lee (2018) used the 2016 candlelight vigils in South Korea to study the role of Facebook in facilitating participation. His study focuses on the type of news exposure on Facebook and its result in participation. In 2016, candlelight vigils were held as a protest movement calling for the impeachment of the South Korean President, Park Geun-hye. Facebook was used as the primary medium to encourage participation. Facebook was chosen as the focus of this particular study by Lee (2018), as it was used as the online platform in the candlelight vigils and it was the most popular online platform used in South Korea. 16 million of the 51 million people in South Korea are active Facebook users (Lee, 2018).

Facebook allows activist to avoid the constraints of mainstream media that is traditionally used to cover protests. They are able to communicate directly with followers and broadcast their own information in real time (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Reuter & Szakonyi, 2015). This shifts the norms of protest communication. Mobilizing for protests events and activities, such as the candlelight vigils, become more widespread on social media. News and injustice stories are also shared and more visible on social media (Lee, 2018). This gives followers the opportunity to view more protest information and stories giving them the opportunity to engage by expressing their opinion on this topic (Elatantawy & Wiest, 2011).

Protest participation via social media can be initiated through discussion from breaking news (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, & Pearce, 2011; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012) and consistent updates of events and information such as protest mobilization information, information that is not spread through mainstream media (Hoffman, 2006).

A Facebook user's online social network mirrors their offline social network, people are often Facebook friends with family members, friends, colleagues and other acquaintances. This means that the content they see on Facebook reflects the interest of their online social networks. Facebook users are then incidentally exposed to content that is of interest to their online social connections, this means that a user will see content that represents their interest and content that represents the interest of their Facebook friends. Incidental content can cover a range of topics, from sport, to entertainment and politics. A Facebook user that attends UWC can develop online social ties through friends that will link them to information related to UWC or UWC Facebook pages. The diversity of the content is determined by an algorithm on Facebook (Bode, 2016; Theocharis & Lowe, Van Deth, & García-Albacete, 2015 as cited in Lee, 2018). This means that SNS increases a user's exposure to political content, providing a platform for people to engage and express their opinions, this leads to interaction and may motivate offline participation; creating a participant from an observer (Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009).

Lee's (2018) study aimed to establish the role of Facebook in protest and participation and if protest participation is initiated through interaction of incidental or purposeful political news exposure on Facebook. His study concluded that there is no direct relationship between protest participation and Facebook use. People that expressed their political views on Facebook did not necessarily take part in physical protest activities. Contrasting to previous studies (Mercea, 2011; Valenzuela et al, 2014) discussed Lee (2018) found that participation in protest activities were not higher among people that had Facebook accounts compared to individuals who did

not have Facebook accounts. The other findings in Lee's (2018) study supported previous work that concluded that Facebook did not promote direct protest participation but indirect participation (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga & Valenzuela, 2011; Shah *et al.*, 2005, 2007; Valenzuela, 2013; Valenzuela *et al.*, 2012).

Diani (2000), as cited in Lee (2018), states that protest participation is the result of a deeper commitment to a cause and is not the result of engagement in political discussion on Facebook. Lee (2018) concludes that news that is decisively sought on Facebook is done so by an individual that will take part in political events. Incidental political news exposure does not lead to any further political interest. There are a multitude of interpretations and also how protests occur and the reason for the protests, this shows how this particular area of research in social media protests is emerging.

## **2.8 Images of Protest in Social Media**

The fourth online protest that I will be discussing is pertinent because it focuses primarily on protest images on SNS. Mattoni and Teune (2014) define street protests as the physical manifestation or the active expression of dissent. The role of images in protests have been to catalogue moments and become evidence of eyewitness accounts (Bruns & Hanusch, 2017; Chouliaraki, 2015; Mortensen 2013). Images form a large part of the activist's communication repertoire as the activists use images to show police brutality, violence against activists and peaceful protests from activists (Andén-Papadopoulos, 2014; Mattoni and Teune, 2014; Mortensen, 2013; Poell and van Dijck, 2015), making images a key factor in the communication from activists to the public. This also allows for an alternative from media representation. The use of images on UWC FWF Facebook page is also of interest here.

The role of social media in the sharing of images raises new questions as to what images are used by official entities compared to the images used by activists (Fuchs, 2012; Milan, 2015; Mirzoeff, 2017; Poell and van Dijck, 2015) and asks the question whether violent images receive more traction than other types of images (Neumayer & Rossi, 2018). Notably, there have been few studies on the role of images on social media and protesting, considering the new affordances social media allows official and activist's organizations in their self-representation (Neumayer & Rossi, 2018).

Neumayer & Rossi (2018) highlight the concerns with gatekeeping in the media. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) as cited in (Neumayer & Rossi, 2018) define the relationship between the media and organizations as two separate units that convey their own interpretation of the protests. Mainstream media has the advantage of power imbalance and public dependency in their favour, disadvantaging the voice of the movement unless favoured by journalists. Authorities, public officials, and established organizations are automatically positively represented in the media, unlike movements that have to work hard to establish credibility in the media and avoid being ignored, mistranslated and misrepresented (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993).

This means that often organizations have to adapt their communication style in order to be noticed, this can be seen in the language use that is produced from organizations to fit the mainstream media requirement (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). In other words, the protesters themselves may opt to use emotive images and historical references to popularize or sensationalize their cause. Linkages with other online sources and trends can also be used to their advantage which mainstream media cannot grapple with. The introduction of social media has enabled organizations to communicate without adhering to the norms of mass media. They are able to share images, video and text of their choice directly to the public. Social media has added another level of communication to this domain. Traditional gatekeepers (such as journalist and moderators) in conjunction with algorithms (trending topics), policies of social media, business models and services still manage to dictate the popular content that the public sees (Poell & van Dijck, 2015). Neumayer and Rossi (2018) point out that violent protest images are still more popular when reporting within the domain of mainstream media. The same can be said for the choice of protest images on social media (Poell & van Dijck, 2015), making the grievances of activists less popular. Neumayer and Rossi (2018:4298) state that “social media logics present similar hegemonic narratives, with violent images being privileged over activist grievances”. Grievances are amplified with violence in the public to gain the media’s attention (Mattoni & Teune, 2014). The images of chaos and destruction caused by an organization can (incorrectly) be interpreted by the public, causing the condemnation and credibility for the organization, overshadowing their grievances (Cammaerts, 2012).

Smartphones have allowed for spectators to become eyewitnesses through the sharing of images and videos captured on smartphones (Chouliaraki, 2015; Mortensen, 2011). The eyewitness images and video often document the violence from police brutality and injustice that occur at protests. The capturing and sharing of these images from an eyewitness



perspective changes the power relation between the media and the movement. A “negotiation over meaning” (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993:117), occurs as the public is exposed to images that reflect violence against activist, exposing a different view that was previously hidden from the public and allowing them to have more information that influences their decision making process over the credibility of the movement (Neumayer & Rossi, 2018). In like fashion the online credibility of FMF is of interest here.

Moreover, Neumayer & Rossi (2018:4294) conducted their study on twitter examining the “visual dimension (photos and videos)” of the 2015 Blockupy protests against the opening of the European Central Bank (ECB) headquarters in Frankfurt am Main. The study by Neumayer & Rossi (2018), examined the success of protest images through retweets, they also examined who was responsible for the sharing of violent images from the protest and how the protest is narrated through these images. The results of the study showed that even though social media can be used as an alternative communication platform to the public, the official organizations who also use social media still maintain a high influential power over the activists. The sharing of protests images from activists did not change the power relation between the official and the movement. The activists, gain a more public platform on social media but this does not translate to the legitimacy of their grievances and the validity of their movement. The images shared on social media does not inform of the grievances of the movement but rather becomes a “spectacle of violence” to the audience (Neumayer & Rossi, 2018:4306). The audience interpretation of the meaning of the image is not fixed therefore making the image unstable (Blaagaard *et al.*, 2017).

This particular paper is important to my study as it shows that semiotics have potentially multiple meanings. It can illustrate that there is an online gatekeeping effect as well as, an erasure of violence in some circumstances. I explore this further in a forth coming chapter. I will now focus solely on my research site of Facebook, a platform which is currently the most popular SNS online.

## **2.9 UWC Fees Must Fall Facebook page**

On the 21st of October 2015 the UWC Fees Must Fall Facebook page was started. The page is categorized as a Community Page on Facebook. The page served as a platform to engage with students regarding the Fees Must Fall protest, specific to UWC. In the about section the

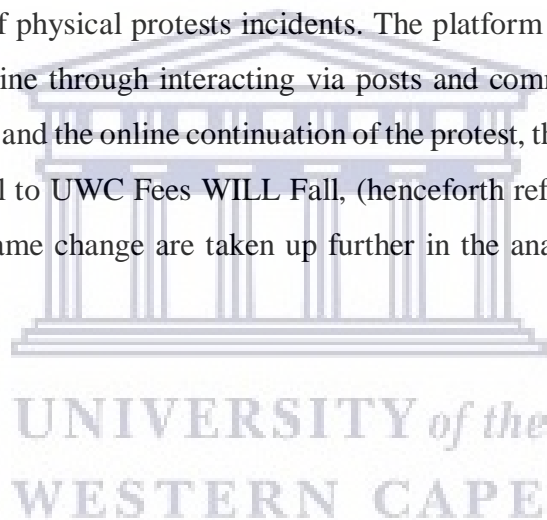
biography description is as follows: “We are a collective of students at UWC, united for the cause against all injustices. We call for a FREE DECOLONIZED SOCIALIST EDUCATION NOW!” (UWCFMF, 2015). To date (January 2019) they have 10185 people that have liked their page.

The page provided its followers with information, updates and requests for donations. After the shutdown of the campus in 2015, the UWC Fees Must Fall Facebook page became an integral part of the protest. No access to the campus meant that there were fewer or no physical protests but this social media platform filled that gap. Nevertheless, the protests continued online.

The UWC Facebook page became the primary communication tool and communication platform for the protests. It was used to publicize demands, share updates, post meeting notices, post pictures and details of physical protests incidents. The platform also allowed students to partake in the protests online through interacting via posts and comments. Shortly after the shutdown of the university and the online continuation of the protest, the page changed its name from UWC Fees Must Fall to UWC Fees WILL Fall, (henceforth referred to as UWC FWF). The implications of the name change are taken up further in the analysis of the UWC FWF Facebook page.

## **2.10 Summary**

In this chapter I have contextualized CMC, SNS, Facebook and Facebook features as the study examines the protest in the online space. A number of different ways that protest studies have been taken up on CMC, SNS and Facebook is provided. The chapter concludes with the background of UWC FWF on Facebook.



## Chapter 3

### Linguistic Landscape and a Multimodal Discourse Analytical Framework

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the analytical framework that is used in this study. The theoretical framework is shaped by the theories that inform the core context of this study. The virtual linguistic landscape is discussed within the framework of Linguistic Landscape. Thereafter, the theoretical framework is complemented by Identity and the concept of Virtual Identity and Social Semiotic Theory of Multimodality. Multimodality and MDA, Resemiotization, Semiotic Remediation, Remediation as Repurposing, Chronotope and Place as/and Space which will be used to analyse the data in this study.

#### 3.1 Linguistic Landscape

The definition for Linguistic Landscape provided by Landry and Bourhis (1997:25) states that:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration.

Referencing public signage in a specified place or region is explored through an analysis of prominence and salience of signage (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Gorter (2006:2) defines Linguistic Landscape as “the use of language in its written form in the public sphere”. Linguistic landscape studies focus on language that feature prominently, intermittently and the omitting of language and its relation to the space in which it is used. The linguistic appropriation of space allows for the symbolic and cultural issues within the landscape to be examined (Peck & Banda, 2014). The power of a language and the meaning created by the language used is reliant on how the language is used in a space (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). Language ideologies in a landscape is represented by the contents, style and genre of a sign (Woolard, 1998). The sign, whether ambiguous or unambiguous, interprets the connection between the people in the landscape and the landscape.

The expansion of linguistic landscape studies have focused on multilingualism and its role in the given landscape, with work from Backhaus (2007); Gorter (2006); Landry & Bourhis

(1997); Shohamy (2006); Spolsky & Cooper (1991) and others, analysing a multitude of multilingual aspects in the linguistic landscape (as cited in Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). Some studies have focused on the “presence or absence of English and other languages not indigenous to the area” (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006; Backhaus, 2006, 2007; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Huebner, 2006; MacGregor, 2003; McArthur, 2000; Schlick, 2002 as cited in Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010:14).

Linguistic landscape studies have also been expanded on in the subject of linguistic landscape and agency, (Woldemariam & Lanza, 2014), which is linked to the notion of power, identity and access. The study of material culture and linguistic landscape (Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009; Aronin & O’Laoire, 2012) to explain the connection between objects in the environment and their relationship with human interaction. Peck and Stroud (2015) have also moved this dynamic field forward, case in point is the study of the body as a corporeal linguistic landscapes, a moving site on which people place signs in the form of tattoos for others to read. While linguistic landscape studies abound, some have argued that the field would benefit greatly when theorist focus less on language per se and more on the landscape as an assemblage of semiotics (Banda & Jimaima, 2015; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010; Kress, 2010).

### **3.2 Semiotic landscape**

Chandler (2007) defines the word semiotic as the “study of signs”, he includes words, images, sounds, gestures and objects in his reference of signs. Illustrating that the study of semiotics is the study of a “sign-system” meaning that you cannot study one sign in isolation but that multiple signs work together to create a meaning (Chandler, 2007).

When introducing the concept of semiotic landscape, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) state that all landscapes are semiotic, “we thus take semiotic landscape to mean, in the most general sense, any (public) space with visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making” (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010:2). A landscape cannot be understood through the study of one sign in isolation but by taking into account all the signs that make up the message in the landscape. They therefore propose that linguistic landscape should be referred to as semiotic landscape, as the landscape is made up of semiotics and the study of linguistic landscape is based on the study of semiotics in a landscape whereas linguistic only refers to one element in the landscape, (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010).

A multimodal approach can be taken when studying semiotic/linguistic landscape such as the recent studies by Thurlow and Jaworski (2014), Stroud and Jegels (2014) and Banda and Jimaima (2015). This study will also adopt a multimodal approach to the study of the virtual semiotic/linguistic landscape of the UWC FWF Facebook page within the virtual space.

### **3.3 Virtual Linguistic Landscape**

With the overwhelming number of scholarly contributions still aimed at traditional linguistic landscape studies, some landscapes are still largely uncharted. The term cityscape was introduced by Gorter (2006:2) highlighting that linguistic landscape studies are mostly conducted in urban areas compared to rural areas. Banda and Jimaima (2015) shared this sentiment quoting Zabrodskaia and Milani (2014) that linguistic landscape studies in the rural areas are “extremely rare”. Banda and Jimaima (2015:644) then introduced the term “rural-cape” with their study on repurposing in the rural landscape of Zambia. The virtual space, like in fashion, can also be included as a space that is often overlooked for linguistic landscape studies. According to Iedema (2003:33) “the influence of electronic communication, the globalization of trade and commerce, and the increasingly political-cultural mix of the countries in which we live mark important facets of this changing landscape”. The focus of this study is on the linguistic landscape in the virtual space, exploring the concept of virtual linguistic landscape (henceforth VLL) as introduced by Ivkovic and Lotherington (2009).

As previously mentioned, linguistic landscape studies the language in a public space (Gorter 2006, Landry & Bourhis, 1997 and others) and the World Wide Web is a public space where communication takes place via the “exchange of text, image, sound, video and other multimedia files” (Kircova 1999), making linguistic landscape studies possible. “The VLL describes the linguistic cyberscape just as the LL describes the linguistic cityscape.” (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009:19). If compared to an urban landscape the virtual landscape consists of the same public signage such as billboards, shop signs, notices etc. The signage in the virtual landscape is however easily changed, removed, or increased compared to signage in the physical space (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). “The VLL has more in common with the rotating content on physical billboards than with stationary signs because websites are cheaper and easier to maintain, develop and expand”, (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009:19).

The virtual linguistic landscape also differs in the manner in which an individual interacts with the virtual space, it can be accessed from anywhere and at any time. In order to interact with a physical space, a person must “immerse” themselves in that space to be a part of it, (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). People using the virtual space are not limited to how the landscape relates to them, whereas the physical landscape targets local population with signage that is understood and relevant to them, (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). The virtual space provides a landscape where people are able to interact with “specific communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wegner, 1998 as cited in Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009:19), engaging in signage that is relevant to them.

Our experiences and actions in the virtual space are often referenced by using the same words that are used in the physical space, indicating similarities between actions (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). Case in point are words that describe physical actions in the physical space such as ‘shout’, ‘surf’ or ‘visit’ are used to describe actions in the virtual space even though none of them are physically possible online. The same applies to use of names that represent physical places or spaces such as chat room, virtual tour, social networking site, they are metaphors for the virtual space you are using, (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). By using metaphors that represent the physical space we are creating a familiar space and experience in the virtual space, a space that could mirror the physical space we live in.

### **3.4 Identity**

The essentialist perspective describes identity of self as being fixed and continuous (Horner & Weber, 2012). This perspective states that people are born with their identity and that it does not change over time. The essentialists perspective uses a the image of a peach to explain the concept of identity, the stone of the peach is what constitutes the core of the identity of self, it is the part of identity that remains the same (Horner & Weber, 2012). Goffman (1959) states from a sociological perspective identity is the mental model people have of themselves, people form and present their identity to others through their social interactions. The social constructivist perspective views identity as constantly evolving and changing (Horner & Weber, 2012). The concept suggests that identity is not fixed but is made up of multiple layers like an onion. Identity, like the onion, is made up of varying degrees of layers. The social constructivist view is the more popular approach to identity and Horner and Weber (2012:84)

suggests it is because people are viewed as “actively constructing (or co-constructing) their identity in society”.

Identity was first viewed as fixed and stable and separate from language and later changed to the view that identity is believed to be dependent on language through interaction production and negotiation (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Traditionally in linguistics, identity was determined by language and ethnicity, a person was labelled as Zulu if they spoke Zulu and was born to Zulu speaking parents. This meant that the identity of an individual was directly linked to their ethnicity (Ferris, Peck, & Banda, 2014).

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) view identity as a process of construction and performance. Their framework moves away from viewing identity from a single aspects and adopts the multiplicity approach. Their proposed identity framework differentiates between three types of identities namely, “imposed identities which are not negotiable in a particular time and place, assumed identities which are accepted and not negotiated and negotiable identities which are contested by groups and individuals” (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004:21). Their framework shows that identity must be understood in its entirety. They state that “identities are constructed at the interstices of multiple axes, such as age, race, class ethnicity, gender, generation, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institutional affiliation and social status” and each of these aspects redefines and alters the other aspects (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004:16). Hybridity and new identity options are created through fragmentation and splintering. New discourses create new identity options alongside the existing ones. New and alternative identity options are made possible through hybridity (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

The negotiation of identities is explained by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:20) as “an interplay between reflective positioning, i.e. self-representation, and interactive positioning whereby others attempt to position or reposition particular individuals or groups”. This means presenting an alternative identity to the identity that we challenge or debate. If we reject an identity that is imposed upon us we negotiate a new identity by asserting a preferred identity (Ferris, Peck, & Banda, 2014). This shows that identity is not fixed, an individual may change or negotiate their identity if the context changes, therefore adopting multiple identities, eg. An individual may be a mother at home but at university she is a student which is different from the identity she has at home. Time and context show the flexibility of our identities as these factors impact the changes in our identity. We perform, construct and enact the required identity in the different stages of life but also more immediate in the different context of our

daily interactions (Ferris, Peck, & Banda, 2014). The “performativity of identity can be defined as the way in which our identity is a product of our performance” (Ferris, Peck, & Banda, 2014:428). This means that identity is created from the repetition of identity acts. Group and individual identities are confirmed through repeated identity acts. Identity is comprehended through a range of identity acts and not merely through one or two identity acts. Nagy and Koles (2014:279) add that social identity is framed by the concept that the self of an individual “tends to be largely determined by their perceived membership in various social groups” such religion, ethnicity, gender, nationality and family.

### **3.4.1 Virtual Identity**

As this study is conducted on the construction of the UWC FWF identity in the online space it is important to understand the transition of identity from the physical space to the virtual space. Virtual worlds offer users the opportunity to create identities that are “moulded according to their desires and expectations” (Kennedy, 2006; Turkle, 1994 as cited in Nagy & Koles, 2014:279). Different identities are presented and performed in online environments, this affordance is created by the detachment from the physical space that creates distance between the performer and the audience allowing the performer to hide aspects of their offline identity and exaggerate or enhance chosen features of their offline identity online. Baptista (2003 as cited in Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013) states that the offline and online identities are not independent of each other but that the online self is a facet of the offline identity. Vaast (2007 as cited in Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013 ) contrasts this idea with the suggestion that new identities are created online as the online spaces provides the opportunity for users to adopt a new or different persona. Baker (2009, as cited in Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013:102) proposes a different concept called “blended identity” proposing that virtual identity is “whereby the offline self informs the creation of a new, online self, which then re-informs the offline self in further interaction with those the individual first met online”

Virtual environments exist without the same physical limitations and realities, instead they provided users with a blank slate where they are able to construct their desired virtual identities (Kennedy, 2006; Turkle, 1994 as cited in Nagy & Koles, 2014), allowing for the self-creation and redefinition of their virtual identity with the new possibilities from the virtual space. (Matviyenko, 2010; Riberio, 2009; Turkle, 1995 as cited in Nagy & Koles, 2014). Users take the opportunity of the freedom of the virtual space to construct unique identities by using the



multiplicity of available symbolic materials (Clothier, 2005; Tubella, 2005 as cited in Nagy & Koles, 2014).

### **3.5 Social Semiotic Theory of Multimodality**

As the virtual linguistic landscape of Facebook is multimodal, a brief overview of social semiotic theory in relation to multimodality is provided. “Social-semiotic theory is interested in meaning, in all its forms” (Kress, 2010:54). Meaning is created through social interactions in social environments. The theory is as a result of “the social”. “The social” is the source that generates meaning, semiotic processes and forms therefore making the theory social-semiotic (Kress, 2010:54). Sign forms the nucleus unit of semiotics as semiotics is the system of signs used by humans in a social interaction. The sign shows form and meaning and exists in all modes and modes are the semiotic resources used to make meaning. In a social interaction “signs are made rather than used”, and is therefore the distinguishing factor of this theory (Kress, 2010:54). This theory focuses on sign-making in a social interaction and as opposed to sign usage in a social interaction. The theory investigates the meaning of different semiotic modes and their collective usage to create meaning in a communication situation.

In Social Semiotics, “signs are always newly made in social interaction; signs are motivated, not arbitrary relations of meaning and form; the motivated relation of a form and a meaning is based on and arises out of the interest of makers of signs; the forms/signifiers which are used in the making of signs are made in social interaction and become part of the semiotic resources of a culture” (Kress, 2010:54). This means that signs are not used and sent they are not random or used by chance. Signs are made and remade by the sign maker. The motivation that determines the choice of sign is based on and stems from the interest of the sign maker. The forms/signifiers chosen to create the sign is dependent on the social interaction. In every interaction, sign makers use the semiotic resources that are available to them to create meaning. Signs are chosen, shaped differently for their intended purpose and interpreted in the context of use in communication. It can therefore be concluded that signs are made and remade through this process (Kress, 2010). A “social-semiotic theory attends to the general principles of representation: to modes, means and arrangements” (Kress, 2010:59).

Social semiotics and the multimodal dimensions of the theory, inform us about agency and interest; about processes of sign-making in social environments; about meaning (-making);

about the meaning potentials of cultural/semiotic forms; about the resources for making meaning and their respective potentials as signifiers in the making of signs-as-metaphors. All the signs used in the modes of text and the relation between them can be described and analysed by the social semiotic theory. Multimodal social semiotics theorizes meaning from three 'perspectives'. Semiotics is the primary concept that frames this theory, meaning making is present in all communication, representation and media representations of communication. The second position of this theory raises the question: "What kinds of theoretical and actual entities are common to all modes and to all the types of relations between them?" relating to the multimodal aspects such as modes and the connections between them. The third perspective of this theory details the categories of the signs according to their specific modes. These categories give reference to the material affordances, its histories of social shaping and the cultural origins/provenance of elements of that mode" (Kress, 2010:61). The conventional path of the study of linguistics is to separate form from meaning. Meaning is studied through semantics, form is studied through syntax and its use is studied through pragmatics. Multimodal social semiotics have however, combined form and meaning to create an integrated unit, a sign.

Resemiotization and Remediation have become important conceptual/analytical tools in the study of LL (Banda & Jimaima, 2015). These tools explain the various modes used and the relationships between the use of semiotics to create meaning. A more comprehensive and indepth understanding is sort with the use of the above mention analytical tools. Multimodality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Kress, 2001; Iedema, 2003), Resemiotization (Iedema, 2003) and Repurposing (Banda & Jimaima, 2015) is used in my study to examine the LL of UWC FWF in the virtual space.

Multimodality "was introduced to highlight the importance of taking into account semiotics other than language-in-use, such as image, music, gesture, and so on" (Iedema, 2003: 33). Kress (2010:36) states that "communication is always multimodal". The affordances of new technology allow for more inclusion of image and sound in the creation of a message and less dependency on language (Kress, 2010). Discourse analysis concentrates on language use "above the sentence" which are the aspects of talk and interaction. Our increasing use of technology and the internet has increased our consumption of messages that are multimodal, raising our awareness and interest in the complexity of the messages we consume (Iedema, 2003). Our progression from using 'language in isolation' is moving to meaning making that includes sound, image, gesture and other modes allowing for the exclusion of language as the dominant mode in some cases. Multimodality is about "recognizing that language is not at all

‘the centre of all communication’ (Iedema, 2003: 39). It aims provide a tool that includes the “multi-semiotic complexity” of the messages we consume and produce (Iedema, 2003).

The increasing combination of visuals, image, sound, verbal and non-verbal modes on television and CMC communication has made multimodality more challenging and interesting. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) permits different modalities that encompass any multimodal text to be analysed textually (O’Halloran, 2011). Multimodal text must have cohesion. They have to relate or bind together in discourse. Cohesion binds meaning and elements together in a multimodal text. All parts of a text should relate to one another therefore having a continuity of expression. Interpretation in a multimodal text is dependent on cohesion. The semantic ties in a text are at one point the same as another semantic tie in the same text (O’Halloran, 2011). The analysis of a multimodal text illustrates the meaning making contributions of the various modes used (Bock, 2013). Peck and Banda (2014) state that multimodality in Linguistic Landscape captures and explains the diverse semiotic resources that are used to create signs in the landscape, making multimodality a fundamental part of the LL.

### **3.6 Resemiotization and Semiotic Remediation**

Multimodality is sort to be a multiplicity of semiotics used in the creation of a text to create meaning. Semiotics other than language, like image, is used to construct ideas and messages that reflect meaning. (Kress and Leeuwen, 1996). Kress (2001: 67) states that “the shape and the direction of the current communicational world demand a re-assessment, in which language is just one of a number of modes of communication, all which are culturally and socially shaped”. The use of language as the primary mode for communication is becoming less dominant. It is an indication of the change in choice people make when creating and transferring messages. Multimodality allows for the use of various semiotics to be combined to create meaning, using language in conjunction with other semiotics (Kress, 2001). This allows for a shifting from the idea that language must be used in isolation. Music, image, gesture and so forth can be included in meaning making (Kress, 2001; Iedema, 2003) and that modes are not understood in isolation by the reader. A message that contains text and images together is read as a whole and not separately.

Resemiotization is about how meaning making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of a practice to the next” (Iedema 2003: 41). Resemiotization refers to the displacement and translation from one semiotic mode to another. It refers to the translation of text into different modes as the social process changes but without dropping or changing the message (Iedema, 2003). It can reference the “range of processes revolving around the different uses of language” (Iedema, 2003:41), for example the path from speech to text to a digital document. The message remains the same when the mode changes. Resemiotization can simply be understood as the various shapes one message can be transformed into.

Semiotic Remediation is defined as the “the diverse ways that humans’ and nonhumans’ semiotic performances (historical or imagined) are re-represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity” (Prior *et al.* 2006, 734). The semiotic performances can also be reported and re-voiced across modes, media and chain of activity (Prior & Hengst 2010; Banda & Kunkeyani 2015; Banda & Mawadza 2015). Simply put, remediation is the use of signs to create new meaning. A sign can be used a multiple of times across different modes and media, constructing a different meaning in each instance but without changing the sign. Semiotic Remediation acknowledges the re-purposing and re-performing of text from prior texts, the re-voicing and reporting of talk, the re-performing of gestures and actions, the repurpose of objects and the re-present and re-make of others ideas, the world view and themselves (Bolter & Grusin 2000; Banda 2014; Banda & Kunkeyani 2015; Banda & Mawadza 2015; Banda 2014, 2016). In an attempt to illustrate the difference between resemiotization and remediation, Prior and Hengst (2010) note that remediation entails the repurposing of existing semiotics for new or present activities.

### **3.7 Remediation as Repurposing**

“Prior and Hengst (2010) and Irvine (2010) maintain that although a reproduction of an oral report into a reported or written form can be said to be remediation, it does not necessarily entail repurposing” (Banda and Jimaima, 2015:645). The above statement explains that a mode has changed, but the purpose (or message) of the mode has not changed. In both cases the message in the written report will still be the same message as the one from the oral report, no repurposing has taken place in the change of modes. Previous studies have focused on remediation without repurposing, the mode changes but the meaning stays the same, with the

previous studies showing a focus on other linguistic concepts that take place through remediation (Irvine 2010; Prior and Hengst, 2010; Scollon and Scollon, 2003; Hiramoto and Park 2012; Fairclough, 2003; Briggs and Bauman 1992; Silverstein and Urban, 1996; Iedema, 2003; Bernstein, 2000 and Linell, 1998, as cited in Banda and Jimaima, 2015).

Banda and Jimaima (2015) illustrate remediation as repurposing by illustrating the use of repurposing as a conceptual tool in their linguistic/semiotic landscape study. Their study examines the role of repurposing in “human-sign-environment interaction” and the constantly changing social associations and the different ways semiotics are used for multiple purposes (Banda & Jimaima, 2015:645). Repurposing is possible even when the mode or multiple modes in one communication event does not change (Irvine, 2010). Banda and Jimaima (2015:645) note that repurposing can easily be explained as “recycling of material or content from one medium in another medium for a different purpose”. Multiple semiotics, such as talk, artefact use and production, gesture and environmental structure interaction, are used simultaneously in the layered development of a sign – and place-making (Prior and Hengst, 2010; Banda and Jimaima, 2015).

The aim of repurposing is not to reproduce or duplicate prior forms, the aim is to extract new meanings that potentially offer a new experience (Bolter and Grusin, 2000). Repurposing is not limited to media relationships but also extends to the ‘refashioning of materials and practices’ and the creative ‘borrowing and adapting [of] materials and techniques whenever possible,’ for new purposes and meanings (Bolter & Grusin, 2000:68). The concept of remediation plays a significant role in semiotic analysis because a “careful tracing of semiotic analysis [has to take place] across chains and for a subtle and precise vocabulary for practices of alignment as well as processes of transformation across media, genres, and events” (Prior and Hengst, 2010: 10). At the core however, that which is remediated is not repurposed, as the mode may have changed, but the essence of the meaning has stayed the same. Banda and Jimaima (2015:646) have moved away from the study of repurposing between old and new media cultures and have examined repurposing as a means of “recycling and reusing of objects, memory and cultural materialities for sign- and place making, generally”. In their study of repurposing in the linguistic/semiotic landscape, Banda and Jimaima (2015) concluded that repurposing takes place when existing materials and narration are used for sign making in the rural areas. Materials are reused for a different purpose without changing the existing look and feel of the material. Objects, old and new, that exist in the landscape are repurposed into signage through

narration. This means that with remediation the sign changes, but the meaning stays the same, while with repurposing the sign stays the same, but its purpose (or meaning) changes.

This study on the virtual linguistic landscape of the UWC FWF protest, examines the manner in which a protest is repurposed and investigates the repurposing of a social networking platform, Facebook.

### **3.8 Virtual Linguistic Ethnography**

Contemporary studies in Linguistics have a responsibility to engage with the virtual non-traditional platforms. Hine (2000) introduced the idea of virtual ethnography, adding another facet to how an ethnographic study can be conducted. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) writes about the various ways in which ethnography can be termed and understood. Many researchers have added their own definition to it because it easily overlaps with other labels (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). One definition for ethnography however, is when “the ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issue with which he or she is concerned” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983:2). By proposing the term Virtual Ethnography, Hine, (2000) is not introducing a new concept but rather extending the platform on which ethnography is being conducted to the virtual space.

### **3.9 Chronotope**

A chronotope is defined as a “semiotic representation of time and place peopled by certain social types” (Agha, 2007:321). A chronotope links the representation of time to the place and personhood. It draws a more detailed picture of personhood within time and place. The picture created by a chronotope is shaped by the participation framework, which can be understood as the representation of the act that leads to the creation and interpretation of said chronotope (Agha, 2007). Bakhtin (1981), as cited in (Agha, 2007) adds that all semiotic representation are chronotopic because they occur in time and space. Bakhtin (1981), as cited in (Agha, 2007) illustrated that in order for a person to understand the meaning in an experience it must be formulated in an audible and visible sign. Each representation of an experience consists of a “temporal-spacial expression” that signals its time and space (Agha, 2007:322). The “temporal-spacial expression” connects the chronotopes that they portray to the time and place

(chronotopes) in that present experience, showing that all meaning created can be mapped through chronotopes (Agha, 2007)). Prior and Hengst (2010: 6) also explain chronotopes as the “understanding [of] how participants in a moment of discourse routinely navigate multiple representational worlds of indexical fields on the one hand, and also how such situated interactions link to part and projected histories of representation”. Goebel and Manns (2018:1) draw on Agha (2007) in their explanation of “chronotopes as relationships between sign constellations that have become socially valued through imitation in authorized one-to-many participation frameworks (e.g. schools and the mass media)”. They also state that a chronotope from one communication event can be extended and used as a sign in another communication event that reconfigures the sign and the chronotope associated with it, showing that chronotopes are not fixed but fluid in the that manner in which a chronotopic sign can be used to create meaning (Goebel & Manns, 2018).

Chronotopes will be especially important for this study where signs are imbued with significance because of their link to another time-space period. More on this concept is discussed in forthcoming chapters.

### **3.10 Place as/and Space**

Place and space cannot be removed from any linguistic or semiotic landscape study, however its apperception is not only physical. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006:220) adds that ‘what matters is the site as much as the kind of surface on which the text is received’. The role of place in the interpretation of a sign is imperative, noting place as an important contributor to the meaning making process. The study of geosemiotics refers to the link between sign and place, emphasizing the importance of place in the creation and interpretation process (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Text are always applied to contexts and practices of their construction, production, reuse and consumption (Blommaert, 2008). Geosemiotics is defined as “study of social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world” (Scollon and Scollon, 2003: 2). In their study of Linguistic Landscape, Landry & Bourhis (1997) have study the concept of ‘placeness’ and how it is conceived through ‘indexical meaning’ (i.e. the derivable meaning(s) of the sign on and about the community space at which the sign is found), and ‘symbolic meaning’ (i.e. the symbolic meaning of the sign on and about the community). Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (2005) mention that events that are shaped by the representation and construction of space and place, and the various

interactions and identities that exist in those spaces, have a strong influence on how people use language.

In relation to protests, Rojo (2014) states that occupation as a protest act, where a public site is turned into a 'site of resistance', are the activists' way of assembling ideas and publicizing their political discourse. Goutsos and Polymeneas as cited in Cerimaj (2018:24) 'assert that space is 'socially produced... by human activity', and therefore the concept of space is not interchangeable with 'place'". Place is first a geographical location and becomes a space when it is occupied by humans, both physically and mentally (Goutsos & Polymeneas, 2014). Space can therefore be defined by the manner of interaction and the perception of it, by the social actors of that space. Space is not defined by its physical properties. The meaning of a space is therefore not fixed, the meaning can be re-appropriated and transformed by the social actors that inhabit it (Goutsos & Polymeneas, 2014). The concept of space in this study is not only defined by the physical boundaries and objects, the definition also includes the language and interactional practices found in that space (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). This therefore includes various kinds of social interactions, sociocultural arrangement of designated areas, cultural symbols and the presence of language constitute a space (Peck & Banda, Observatory's Linguistic Landscape: Semiotic Appropriation and the Reinvention of Space, 2014).

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter was a summary of the theoretical framework used in this research project. The above theories are important to this study as they are best suited to understand the research on the virtual landscape through the lens of Linguistic Landscape. The Social Semiotic Theory of Multimodality was chosen as the theory to analyse the data in this study.

The analytical framework concentrates on the theories used to analyse the data in the representation of protests on the virtual space. The main approaches used is virtual linguistic ethnography (VLE), multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), resemiotization semiotic remediation and remediation as repurposing. The theories of chronotope and place and space have also been reviewed.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Methodology**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research methods used to conduct this study. The research design defines and describes the qualitative methods and the virtual ethnographic approach of this study. The data collection and analysis approach is discussed, which includes the data sampling and data collection techniques. Finally, the methodology limitations and ethical considerations pertaining to this study is discussed.

#### **4.1 Research Design (Qualitative and Virtual Ethnography)**

The research design is largely qualitative in nature and adopts virtual ethnographic approach. Some qualitative data in terms of graphs are provided in later chapters.

##### **4.1.1 Qualitative**

Henning (2004) notes that when a study adopts a qualitative research method it indicates that the “characteristics or the properties of a phenomenon are examined for better understanding and explanation” (Henning, 2004:5). It is the natural development and freedom of action that is represented and captured through the qualitative approach. In this study, the researcher examines a Facebook page started by the Fees Must Fall Activists specific to UWC. The development of the Page in terms of the features used is studied through a qualitative approach. According to Tewksbury (2009: 47), “[q]ualitative researchers collect data directly from people, whether by observing them, interacting with them or talking with them”. This gives researchers the opportunity to develop an understanding of people’s behaviour, such as their ideologies and social motivations supporting their beliefs, values and emotions (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1987). For the research collection, I joined the UWC FWF Facebook page to fully immerse in the online activities of the UWC FWF activists. Kelly (2006: 287) supports this with the statement that qualitative researchers “want to make sense of feelings, experiences,

social situations or phenomena as they occur in the real world, and therefore they want to study them in their natural setting”.

#### **4.1.2 Virtual Ethnography**

Ethnography has been an important tool for those in sociolinguistics studies for a long time. It is defined by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:2) as occurring when “the ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issue with which he or she is concerned” Ethnography allows the researcher to immerse him or herself within the context so that the data collected can be as authentic as possible. The benefits of prolonged engagement with a research area and the participants are far-reaching with researchers often discovering latent facts about their research site after living, working or studying the area for a while. Conducting fieldwork in the virtual space offers new challenges which are addressed here.

Hine (2000) introduced the idea of virtual ethnography, adding another facet to how an ethnographic study can be conducted. By creating the term Virtual Ethnography (VE), Hine, (2000) is not introducing a new concept but merely extending the platform on which ethnography is being conducted to the virtual space.

The role of Virtual Ethnography is to capture data that is created through technology or electronic information. This approach enables a researcher to include technology based information in their research as if they are doing research in the real world (Hine, 2000). An example of this would be if an ethnographer is researching communication in an office environment and the participants send emails and social media texts as part of their communication practice, that information would therefore be part of the office communication and would therefore need to be included. Virtual Ethnography also allows the researcher to broaden their platform for research to online platforms (Hine, 2000) such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Kelly-Holmes (2015:134) uses Hines (2000) Virtual Ethnography to create a framework for analysing “monologic sites”. Monologic Sites are websites that are a form of one to many communication e.g. corporate websites, news sites, search engines, individual homepages, etc.,

(Kelly-Holmes, 2015). These pages are a form of top down communication and are ideal for conducting a Virtual Linguistic Ethnography (henceforth VLE) study.

The framework for such a study is detailed by Kelly-Holmes, (2015) in key steps to conduct this type of study. The steps are as follows: (a) the researcher must remove oneself as an informed and regular user of the internet in order to be able to consciously become aware of the research process, (b) the process of accessing the website must be documented with fieldwork notes (c) a detailed record of the site must be kept meaning that the researcher must keep a record that gives a full detail of the site every time it is accessed this is in order to record any changes to the site (d) hypertextual and intertextual links must be followed and documented to note any changes that may occur (e) hyperlinks must be treated as new information sources and the researcher must view these links as interesting leads that needs to investigate (f) record all changes that relate to content and language on the website specifically by researching and documenting additional information on the website; such as the origins and location of the company or person. Advertising that appears on the website can also form part of data and should be acknowledged and (g) take screenshots to document ‘traversals’ meaning that the researcher needs to track their viewing experience of the website every time they view the site therein embracing the fluidity of the internet rather than seeing its ephemeral nature as a drawback for research.

This framework allows for a deep virtual ethnography of the various sites on the internet, (Kelly-Holmes, 2015). The assessment of meaning and prominence of language on commercial and public signs falls within the ambit of linguistic landscape research. This approach to the study of language and signage in the virtual space is undertaken within the relatively new space of virtual linguistic landscape (Ivokovic & Lotherington, as cited in (Kelly-Holmes, 2015).

## **4.2 Research Design (Site, Sampling and Analysis)**

### **4.2.1 Research Context**

I was a postgraduate student at UWC in 2015 when the student-led Fess Must Fall protests started at this university. After a series of fierce protest events, the campus was officially shutdown on 26 October 2015, by the current Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Tyrone Pretorius. All academic activity, such as lectures and tutorials were cancelled and no students or staff were allowed on campus. The 2015 year end exams were then scheduled to be written

in an off campus venue. During this period on Facebook, I saw a Facebook friend like a page called “UWC Fees Must Fall”, which was later changed to UWC Fees WILL Fall. This was my first introduction to this Page, I browsed the Page and saw that the UWC FWF activists were still communicating with the students and public, during the shutdown of the university, via Facebook. I joined the page, by clicking the “like” button in order to follow the page. As previously mentioned Facebook is a SNS platform that functions as a communication tool, allowing its users to communicate with each other. As a Facebook user, I was able to see the posts of the Page I was following on my personal Facebook profile. This allowed me to see the latest information or status updates without having to go onto that particular organizations’ Facebook page. All the information they published appeared on my personal profile newsfeed along with the latest posts published by my Facebook friends, Groups that I had joined and Pages that I was following. So as a Facebook user I was now following the UWC FWF Facebook page. It is important to note that the Page was a public profile. This means that all posts and other information on the UWC FWF Facebook page is available to the public. If you are not a Facebook user you will still be able access the information published on this Page.

After following the page and choosing a qualitative and virtual ethnographic approach as the most suitable method for collecting data. I ensured that I read every post on the UWC FWF Page. I also read the comments of each post and observed the likes and the reactions of the posts. I observed the page and noted any changes that occurred in the representation of the page, such as the profile picture, cover picture, name change or any other changes that occurred. I followed the UWC FWF page and observed without interacting. This means that I did not “like” and posts or comment on any posts of the page. As a researcher I did not partake in any communication activity or interaction on the page.

I also implemented an archiving system of the data that I had collected. I took screenshots of the page and saved them in a separate folder on my computer, this served as an offline replica of the Facebook page. The affordance of an archive allows for the capturing of data in the event of the page shutting down or being shut down. Consistent with Kelly-Holmes (2015) framework, I took screenshots of the page to capture all the information on the Facebook page. I took screenshots on the same day every week for a period of six months. The first set of screenshots I took was from the first post to the last post of that time period which was only a few weeks of activity on the page. Thereafter I would take screenshots starting at the newest post from the previous week. The aim was to capture all the posts via the screenshots, I aim to capture every detail of the post, such as the date published, image (if used), the reactions and

likes and the number of comments. The amount of screenshots would differ per week depending on the activity on the page by the administrators of the UWC FWF Facebook page. The screenshots were archived in a separate folder labelled “Facebook FWF”, shown in figure 4.2, in a folder name “MA Data” as shown in Figure 4.1.

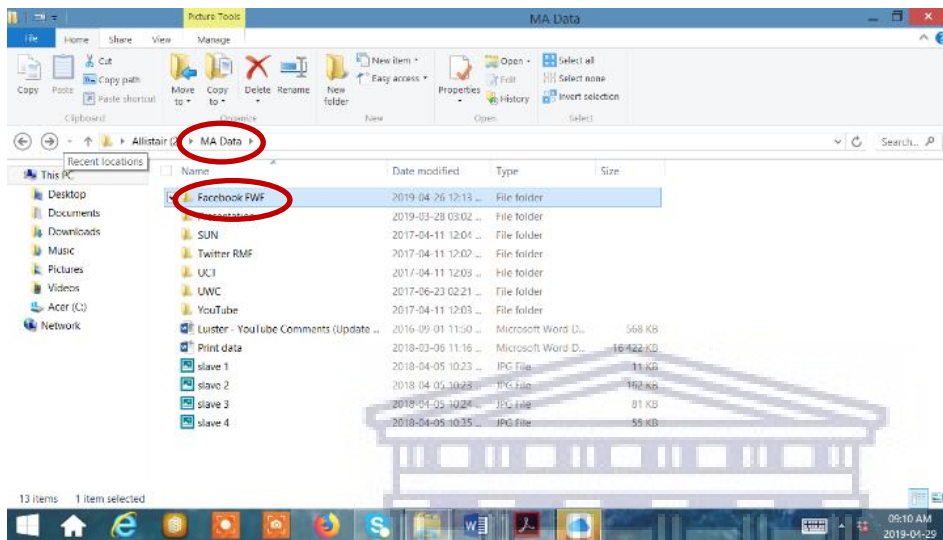


Figure 4. 1 Data Archive Folder

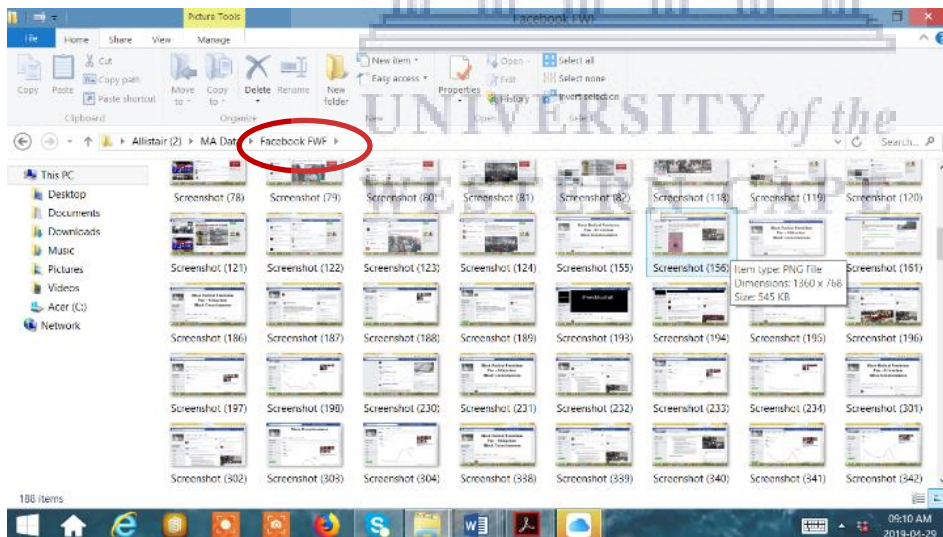


Figure 4. 2 Screenshots in the Facebook FWF Folder

As a researcher following the UWC FWF Facebook page I was always observing the content of the posts and keeping a record of the changes that took place on the page such as a change in name, profile picture and cover picture. I also noted other information as part of my observation such as the amount of followers of the page during that particular time. I chose a

distanced ethnographic approach. Morton (2001) describes distanced and involved, as the two methods of conducting ethnographic research on the internet. Schwara (1999:271) adds that the term involved describes “discursive and communicative” approach, while discursive or communicative research involves the active involvement of the researcher in the given environment. The discursive method can however lead to the influence on the subjectivity of the researcher (Schwara , 1999).

#### **4.2.2 Data Sampling**

As the data (screenshots) taken constitute what can be referred to as ‘big data’ I deliberately selected a small, but purposeful representation of the data to demonstrate the protest as it was managed by UWC FWF. As a visitor to the UWC FWF Page I do have access to the total number of posts, videos and pictures posted by the administrators of this group. I have chosen nineteen screenshots from the UWC FWF Facebook as data for this research. Due to limitations on the scope of the thesis I have excluded the videos from this analysis.

#### **4.2.3 Data Analysis**

As this data is an assortment of multimodal signs and I am modelling my virtual study on work emanating from linguistic landscape studies, I primarily use multimodality and other tools such as semiotic remediation and repurposing, to analyse my data.

#### **4.3 Advantages and Limitations of Virtual Data**

Collecting data on a virtual platform such as Facebook has allowed for a few advantages in the data collection process. The first advantage is the access to data from the initial implementation of the UWC FWF Page. Facebook allows for all users to view and engage with content that exists is already in existence from before they joined or perused the page. Facebook users are able to almost “go back in time” on a Page or Group and see previous posts that dates back to the start of the given profile. As a researcher I was able to view all the activity on the UWC FWF Page by scrolling backwards to the very first post on their page. This meant that I was able to observe their activity on Facebook from the first day of the creation of their Page.

The second advantage of a Public Page is the ability to access the Page without login on to Facebook. A public Page can be accessed by anyone with internet access. A google search of the Page name allows for access to the page without requiring a Facebook login.

The final advantage of a Facebook page as research site is the affordance of being able to access the site at any time and from anywhere, providing there is internet access. There are no limitations to time and place for accessibility of the site.

The limitation of this research was the risk of access to the data, the UWC FWF Facebook page. The UWC FWF Page, like any Facebook page on this SNS, can be deleted at any point without notification, removing all the data from Facebook and the internet. A Facebook page can be deleted by the administration of the page. The UWC FWF Facebook page is the official page of UWC Fees Must Fall. It was started and is managed by UWC FWF, the name/names of the administrator is not provided on the page and is not part of the required information of the Facebook page. The administration of a Page, who in this case is UWC FWF, control the information and content that is published on the Page. They also have the power to delete the Page, removing all published information from Facebook. A Facebook page can also be deleted by Facebook. Facebook holds the rights to delete a Page if the Page violates the rules of Facebook. The rules state that: “The consequences for violating our Community Standards vary depending on the severity of the violation and a person’s history on the platform. For instance, we may warn someone for a first violation, but if they continue to violate our policies, we may restrict their ability to post on Facebook or disable their profile” (Facebook.com, Community Standards, 2019).

I mitigated this limitation by creating an extensive offline archive of this Page with screenshots.

#### **4.4 Ethical Considerations**

When a virtual ethnography study is conducted, the issue surrounding ethics is complex. Concern around privacy and informed consent is raised when an internet based study is conducted as the borders between these issues are not yet defined (Eysenbach & Till, 2001). For this study I use monologic web and social networking sites which are public and can be accessed without a password. The information extracted from these platforms that is used in the analysis can be found by doing a Google search. Consent is not required for this study as

all the information is available on a public domain. In the event that a post, comment or hashtag is analyzed, a pseudonym will be given to maintain the anonymity of the subject.

Eysenbach and Till (2001) states that when a researcher uses public information or does research in a public space such as observation in a public area or the analysis of public records, they do not need to obtain consent. The status of the domain that is being researched must therefore first be determined in order to determine whether consent is required, (Eysenbach & Till, 2001).

Pace and Livingston (2005) offer a heuristic when “public matter” is “quoted or analyzed without consent:

1. The material is publically achieved and readily available – information can be found on a search engine.
2. No password is required to access the material.
3. The material is not sensitive in nature.
4. No stated site policy prohibits the use of the material.

“In all other cases, consent should be obtained before the research is conducted”, (Pace & Livingston, 2005).

Boards such as Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) and National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) have constituted guidelines for the ethical considerations in internet research. AoIR (2012), state that “ethical issues become salient as the researcher develops research questions, seeks and gains access to individuals and/or information, manages and protects personally identifiable information, selects analytical tools, and represents the data through dissemination, in published reports, conference presentations, or other venues”. They add that the diverse contexts and adaptability of online platforms do not require a strict code of conduct but rather a set of guidelines for internet research.

Some of the guidelines that are highlighted by AoIR (2012) and are applicable to my research states the following:



- “The greater the vulnerability of the community / participant / author, the greater the obligation of the researcher to protect the community / participant / author”.
- “‘Harm’ is defined contextually, ethical principles are more likely to be understood inductively rather than applied universally. That is, rather than one-size-fits-all pronouncements, ethical decision-making is best approached through the application of practical judgment attentive to the specific context”.
- “Ethical issues in every step of the research process must be considered. Issues may arise and need to be addressed in the planning, research conduct, publication, and dissemination process”.

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter defined the research design used in the analysis of this study. A qualitative and Virtual ethnographic approach were the primary research methods used in this study. This chapter also reviewed the data collection process, the research setting and procedure and included a description of the data. The chapter continues with detailing the advantages of the virtual data that were compiled during the data collection process. The limitations of this study were also reviewed. Lastly, the ethical consideration of a virtual ethnographic study is discussed.



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## Chapter Five

### The Social Semiotic Construction of the UWC Fees WILL Fall Home

#### 5.0 Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the UWC FWF Facebook homepage and provide insight into the manner in which this organization chose to use this platform to construct their online identity. Similar to that of a person, there are specific characteristics that are used to introduce, describe and make up the profile of a person, such as a name, face, profile and other short but specific details that give more information about the person. On the SNS, Facebook, the introduction features of a profile are the Username, Profile Picture and the Cover Picture. These three features of the UWC FWF Facebook page have been chosen for the analysis in the examination of the construction of the online identity of a protest organization.

The features on the home page are explained prior to each analysis of said feature to illustrate the intended purpose for which the feature was designed by Facebook, this explanation aids the understanding of the manner in which UWC FWF re-used the features of this platform to construct the negotiated identities (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) of their organization. These features are found on every type of Facebook page however it is the way these features were shaped by the UWC FWF Facebook page that provides first insights into how protests can emerge visually online. The analysis considers the use of the features on the UWC FWF Facebook page in isolation and in conjunction with each other and the effects there-of.

#### 5.1 Facebook page Username

One of the most salient indicators of a home page is the username. A Facebook user is first introduced to a profile by its username and profile picture. The username and profile picture are used in conjunction with each other to create the identity of the profile user. Every Facebook Profile, whether it be a personal Profile, Group or Page, has a username and a profile picture that is visible to a Facebook user or public user (depending on the privacy setting) before viewing the profile (Facebook, 2004). The username and profile picture serves as an introduction to the profile. On Facebook users are not obligated to use their real names, but it is common practice for people to use their real name and include nicknames. Groups and Pages also use this feature as an identification marker for people to be able to find them (Facebook,

2004). The name they use is the name of their business or organization and the same name that is used for their official website. It is also common for smaller divisions of a business or organization to add a differentiating marker to their name, such as location (SA, CPT and JHB) or department (marketing, fundraising), etc. In this case a Facebook user is still able to identify the bigger organization or company that the Profile is a part of.

The name “Fees Must Fall” was chosen for the organization that was started in response to the 2015 tertiary education fee increase. The name of the movement was adopted at every tertiary institution that became part of the Fees Must Fall revolution. The name of the specific institution was added to the beginning or end of Fees Must Fall to indicate the institution or location. This enabled followers of the movement to differentiate and identify institutions, e.g. Fees Must Fall CPUT (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), UP Fees Must Fall (University of Pretoria) and Fees Must Fall Western Cape. These names were also used to represent the fractions of the Fees Must Fall organization on their social media page, Facebook.

At UWC, the Fees Must Fall movement started their Facebook page on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2015 and named their page UWC Fees WILL Fall. The name change from UWC Fees Must Fall to UWC Fees WILL Fall signalled a move away from the national Fees Must Fall movement. As the last institution to join the movement, the UWC activists were arguably shifting away from FMF and creating an independent movement. Their new name was more definitive, using the word “WILL” instead of “must”. The UWC FWF Facebook movement implied action with their name change which simultaneously showed that a definitive result was going to take place. The change from “must” to “WILL” indicated a breakaway from the Fees Must Fall movement and gave the UWC FMF movement a more serious stance. The word “WILL” was written in all capital letters, adding emphasis to the change and the seriousness of the change. The social norms of text implies that words typed in all capital letters are considered to be the same as shouting, placing emphasis on the word. Moreover, the linguistic shift can also be seen as a move away from the other Fees Must Fall organizations indicating a more independent stance. A stance that was relevant and meaningful to the success of the protest at UWC.

## 5.2 Profile Picture

A Facebook profile picture is arguably as important as a username, but appears in a visual mode, like putting a face to a name. The username and profile picture are both used as identification features on Facebook (Facebook, 2004). A profile picture is defined as the image that is used to identify the user and therefore it is important to analyse the images chosen to represent the protest. The picture is set as a public feature and is visible when your name appears on the platform (Facebook, 2004). The aim of this feature is for the user to select an image through which they can be identified. The image acts as a complimentary verification to the username as multiple users with the same name may abound. The profile picture therefore becomes the second feature that is used to identify a user and much more consideration goes into this particular marker of a Page's identity.

Figure 5.1 is a table listing all the UWC FWF Facebook page Profile Pictures.



Figure 5. 1 All the Profile Pictures from the UWC FWF Facebook page

The UWC FWF Facebook page have used a total of eight different pictures as their profile picture from the time of inception to the present date. The pictures are analysed in the

chronological order that they were posted. The analysis focuses on the meaning the profile pictures create in the construction of the online identity of UWC FWF.

The first profile picture taps into an online social justice movement called Anonymous Hackers and was a trending topic and movie in 2015. Anonymous Hackers fought for justice for every citizen of the world, they aimed for social justice online, and they believed in anonymity and hid their identity by wearing a Guy Fawkes mask. The Guy Fawkes mask became the iconic symbol of Anonymous Hackers (AnonymousHackers, 2004).

In the picture an Anonymous Hacker is holding a poster that reads “Education should not be a DEBT Sentence”. This relates to the Fees Must Fall call for free education, with a play on words with “debt” and “death”. They are showing the consequence of tertiary education, saying that the debt of tertiary education has the same effect as death, the students are suffering, they are in pain, and they cannot prosper or live due to the debt of education.

The black and white effect of the picture is a reference to past protest of the university and the country. UWC and South Africa both have a rich history of protest culture and by using the black and white effect on the picture the picture draws on the views schemata of old pictures from protests, including the narrative of those protests in the meaning and identity of the current protest. This picture was uploaded as the profile picture on the UWC FWF page for only a few hours or minutes, the time was not documented on the Facebook page. This makes this picture the shortest time period a picture was used as the profile picture on this page.

The second profile picture was also uploaded on the first day of inception of this page. This profile picture is more evocative and sombre. This picture also makes reference to “student debt” and death, like the first profile picture. Depicting death as the result of student debt, through the representation of the bodies hanging from the individual letters in the word “debt”. This picture uses the Wild West theme in the font of the words to shape the theme of this picture. In the Wild West, lynching was the punishment for crime, here student debt is the crime and the students are being hung for their crime of not being able to pay their university fees.

The anonymity factor in this picture is represented by the bodies. We can see the representation of the human form, of dead bodies but we are unable to make out specific characteristics such as gender, race or age. We are unable to see the faces of the hanging bodies. Even though there is an anonymous representation in the picture, the viewer is able to comprehend that the bodies

represent students who are affected by student debt. The anonymity of the bodies is assumed to include everybody, all students, creating the message that no student is excluded from this problem.

There are accents of red colour on the rope and the bodies, this could be a representation of blood or pain cause by the student debt. The red colour is represented as though it is dripping from the word debt, like debt is the source of the red, the source of the blood or the pain that the red colour represents.

This picture is a graphical representation of the UWC FWF message. Their call for free education stems from the high cost of tertiary education and the inability of the students to pay the costs of tertiary education fees. This picture is a literal representation of the result of tertiary education fees. This picture clearly states that student debt is killing students. The picture is an extremely graphic form of the free education demand.

The #UWCFeesWillFall signature at the bottom of the picture shows that this image was specifically created for the UWC FWF movement and their Facebook page through the identification of the name of the university and the use of the name change Fees WILL Fall instead of Fees Must Fall. This also emphasises the severity of this issue at UWC. The consequence and burden of student debt is a big issue for the UWC student and is a primary issue for the UWC FWF movement.

The Student Debt picture was the profile picture for 11 days. It was also the first 11 days of the protest at UWC during which the shutdown of the university took place. UWC was officially shutdown on 26 October 2015.

The third profile picture was uploaded during the period that the university was shutdown, after a series of reported violent protests on campus. This picture uses the image of school children to relay a message of encouragement to the students of the Fees Must Fall movement to keep fighting. This picture uses future university students to encourage and motivate current university students in their protests. The children in the picture are not portrayed as typical happy, playful children, instead they look serious and worried, concerned about their future. The angle at which the picture is taken aims to provide a clear and close up view of the facial expressions of the children featured in the picture.

This picture is aimed at an audience that is in agreement with the Fees Must Fall Movement as it is not asking the viewer to join or participate in the movement, it is also not expressing a

demand of the Fees Must Fall movement but instead it is motivating participants to continue with their fight. The demand for free education is referenced by the school uniform and the context of the environment where the children are placed. The school uniform emphasises that the problem is related to education and that the problem affects the education of children. The children in the picture also represent the demographic of learners that are the most affected by the high costs of tertiary education fees and are the demographic of learners in need of assistance for fees. This was the UWC FWF Profile picture for three days.

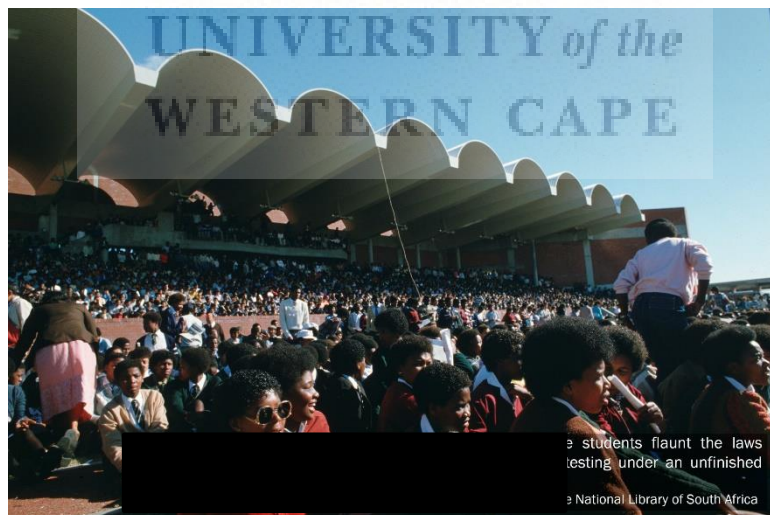
Profile picture four shows the UWC Student Centre converted into a place of protest. This is the first Profile picture that displays an identity that is recognizable or familiar to the UWC students. Every UWC student will be able to recognize the inside of the UWC student centre. The areal shot shows a mass meeting of whom we assume to be UWC FWF supporters as the picture was posted on their Facebook page. I assume that this is a picture from one of the many UWC FWF mass meetings that took place in the student centre and around campus. UWC FWF referred to their gatherings as mass meeting and did not use the term protest or protest meetings, signifying a more peaceful approach and group activity. Since the start of the protests, regular posts of scheduled mass meetings were published on Facebook, inviting and informing followers about these events. This picture was posted after the start of the protests, after many mass meeting were held on campus. This large crowd signifies the increase of participation and support, this picture symbolizes the growth of the organization at a time of physical restriction by the university. This picture was uploaded as the Profile picture during the time period of the shutdown but UWC FWF still continued to hold mass meetings.

The areal view gives the viewer a look into the protest. The audience sees a peaceful gathering in the university's student centre, a gathering that shows unity represented by the assembly of bodies in a circle. The angle protects the identity of the participants but still gives insight into the event that is happening in the picture. At the time that this picture was set as the profile picture, the pictures in the mass media gave a different representation of UWC FWF. The pictures in the mass media portrayed violence, violent and fierce interactions with police, destruction of university buildings and property and lots of fire, with the burning of university property, as shown in figure 5.2, these were the pictures published by the mass media during the 2015 UWC FWF protest. The pictures were taken at the UWC residence and show the burning of UWC furniture during a protest.



*Figure 5. 2 Mass Media pictures from the UWC FWF protest*

Profile picture four has a black and white effect with red accents. The black and white effect blurs the time period of the picture, repurposing themes from past protests and the struggle history of the university. The protest events of the past is reference in the colour effect and the representation of the mass gathering of students as seen in the past pictures in figure 5.3, from previous protest at UWC. The picture creates the image of history repeating itself. The red accents in the picture are added to caps and t-shirts. These items are often used as apparel that represents an individual, a brand or an organization. In this context it can be used to reference the SRC or EFF. This picture was used as the Profile picture for six days. This picture was used as a reaction to contradict the identity of UWC FWF created by the mass media.



*Figure 5. 3 A picture from the 1970 UWC protest*

The home of UWC FWF is again featured in the fifth Profile picture through the use of the red brick. The red brick is a significant feature of many of the buildings on campus. This picture features a traditional Linguistic Landscape sign about the free education demand in the Fees



Must Fall movement. The audience is placed shoulder to shoulder with the woman in the picture, looking at the same thing she is looking at, drawing the viewer in as a participant of the protest unlike the previous pictures that gave the viewer a look from the outside in. This image creates a sense of waiting, in which a viewer is joining an event that is underway and at the event, the members of this organization waiting for free education. The woman in the picture is looking towards doors, giving the impression that what she is waiting for will come through those doors and the signage above the door is the indication of what she is waiting for.

This picture was posted during the protest period when UWC FWF was having ongoing talks with the university management regarding the UWC FWF demands. The rector of UWC, Professor Tyrone Pretorius was invited to UWC FWF mass meetings on campus and these events were documented on the UWC FWF Facebook page. This picture reflects the result of the meetings between UWC FWF and the UWC management and shows that the meetings were not always successful. On the UWC FWF Facebook page posts report failed talks with the Rector or the no show of the Rector to meetings.

The colour used in an image is another mode that creates meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design, 1996), with each colour symbolizing a specific meaning in the context that it is used (Kress & Van Leeuwen, Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design, 1996). The colour red symbolizes a variety of meanings depending on the context in which it is used, it can mean urgency, danger, passion, blood and hostility among other things. In South Africa, a country that has a rich protest history, the colour red has become synonymous with protests. In the fifth profile the text on the banner is boldly written in red making the message visible, eye catching and easy to read. The colour red adds a seriousness to the message on the banner, reinforcing the message as a demand and not a request (Kress & Van Leeuwen, Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design, 1996).

The picture was the UWC FWF Profile picture for 99 days during the period that was at the end of 2015 and the start of 2016. This was also the university vacation period which was preceded by the shutdown. There were no reported protests during this university vacation period.

UWC FWF started the 2016 academic year with Profile picture number six. A black and white picture is used to draw on narratives from past protests of the university and the country. The facial expression of the woman in the picture is used to reflect the pain and anguish of the UWC FWF organization and is also used to draw on the feelings from past protests, such as the 1960

Sharpeville Massacre and the Hector Pieterse photo from the 1976 Soweto uprising, as shown in figure 5.4. Her expression and position is reminiscent of the protest pictures of people running from the police when they were being attacked or shot at. This picture uses the visual of pain and fear to evoke emotion from the viewer.



*Figure 5. 4 The sixth UWC FWF Profile picture draws on the narratives from the 1960 Sharpville Massacre (left) and the 1976 Hector Pieterse (right) pictures*

This is the first profile in which followers can identify the person, the woman in the picture is one of the UWC FWF leaders. This picture uses the image of the organizations leadership to create this identity. By using the identity of the leadership of the movement a marriage between the present, the person in the picture, and the past, her facial expression and position in the

picture, is created. The use of one of the organizations leaders adds familiarity and credibility to the identity created with this picture. Followers would have interacted with her at mass meetings and would be familiar with her as an organization leader. The picture sends the message that the history of past protests is being repeated. The students are suffering, they are being hurt by the authority and they are being killed like the protesters from the past.

The colour red is also present in this profile picture. The words “Anti-Exclusion Campaign” is seemingly placed like a stamp across the face of the woman in the picture. The red text does not block or hide the face of the woman but aims to act out the meaning of the red sign, nullifying her expression of pain and suffering.

This Profile picture renews and reminds followers of UWC FWF demands at the start of a new year. The text in the picture lists UWC FWF demands that are related to issues that students experience at the start of the new academic year such as registration and accommodation problems. The hashtags, #Asinamali (we have no money), #SizofundaNgenkani (we are going to be educated by force) and #FreeEducationNOW, creates connections to other social media platforms and broadens the footprint of UWC FWF with the inclusion of the connections created by the hashtags. This was the Profile picture for 73 days.

Banda and Mafofo (2015) has shown that a contested identity of the university can be created through the commodification of transformation and struggle discourses. This commodification is done through the repurposing of appropriated discourses for marketing purposes (Banda & Mafofo, 2015). The seventh profile picture challenges the identity of the university with a picture that contradicts the identity that the sculpture represents in the physical landscape. The ‘Ending and Beginning’ as the sculpture is named, is a metaphoric and chronotopic representation of UWC (Witz, 2012). A representation of the message that the university is a place where people of colour, who previously were not allowed to attend university can now become educated and obtain degrees. The university’s past, symbolized by the female figure, represents the end of the struggle where people were oppressed and denied education. The present and future, symbolized by the male figure, represents a better and equal opportunity for all to obtain higher education.

During the 2016 protest period, UWC FWF remediated the meaning of the sculpture with the addition of a few artefacts that poignantly changed its identity without damage. The protesters added an apron to the female figure of the sculpture. The figure already represented the low income workers from the past but the addition of the apron brought the representation of the

female figure into the present, renewing the meaning that the figure in the represented (Prior & Hengst, 2010). The apron that was used belong to the uniform of the current outsourced workers at UWC. The workers were identified by the apron. Placing the apron of the present outsourced worker on the “Ending” of the sculpture merged the identity of the past cleaners with the identity of the present cleaners, creating the message that the struggles of the past cleaners are still experienced by the present cleaners and that the struggle for the low income workers at UWC have not ended as intended with past university protest and progress.

The sculpture is further remediated with the use of the chain (Prior & Hengst, 2010). The chain is wrapped around both figures, making reference to slavery. Slaves were chained together with a large chain similar to the one on the sculpture. In the sculpture, the two figures are placed in positions that has them moving away from each other, as a symbolic gesture that the cleaner moving backwards will remain in the past and the graduate moving forward is prospering, gain a better future through education. The addition of the chain around both figures annuls that message. The position of the chain holds the figures together creating the symbolic message that what happens to the one figure will happen to the other. The two figures are in unison. This message combined with the message created by the apron, nullifies the representation of the graduate. Being chained to the cleaner that is enlivened in the present through the apron, the graduate no longer exists but is enslaved as a cleaner by the same factors that oppress the cleaner, showing a repetition of the struggle that was supposed to have ended with the liberation of the university.

The name of the sculpture has also been changed by UWC FWF, the plague has been covered by the banner, renaming the sculpture, “Black Pain, free our parents, end outsourcing”.

The phrase “black pain” is used to describe the emotionally painful experience of an event or movement that affect black people. In South Africa black pain refers to the emotional pain caused by slavery and apartheid. Black pain refers to the suffering and oppression black people endured as a result of slavery and apartheid. The phrase was also used during the FMF movement to describe the suffering of the black students. Black pain is used as a term that described the emotional struggles of black people as a collective (Mosala, 2016). The “Free Our Parents” and “End Outsourcing” phrases on the banner represents the demands from the End Outsourcing protest. The demands on the banner are accompanied by a visual representation of the parents with the use of the apron to dress the female figure of the sculpture and the chain that is wrapped around the sculpture, figure. On the banner, the outsourced

workers are referred to as parents and because this post is posted by the UWC FWF activists on their Facebook page, a student-led movement at UWC, we can assume that the activists/students are referring to the outsourced workers as their parents, the parents of the UWC students. They are creating the message that their parents, the outsourced workers, are not free but enslaved. The use of the sculpture in this picture adds another level of meaning to this message. This demand is related back to the past protests that the sculpture represents and brought forward into the present time. The addition of the outsourced workers apron to the female figure of the sculpture enlivens the “ending” and the meaning that it represents in the current protest. The sculpture in this Profile picture is repurposed to become an artefact in the UWC FWF protest (Prior & Hengst, 2010; Banda & Jimaima, 2015). The meaning is layered and in-depth, meaning is created with the use of the sculpture, the apron, the chains and the banner. The message also creates a trajectory of time and space that extends to other protests.

This Profile picture was set for 105 days and is the first profile picture that explicitly challenges the identity of the university. This picture creates a message that is specific to the issues experienced by a UWC student. This picture explores the ideological foundation of UWC FWF and its relation to UWC with the meaning created by the remediation of the sculpture, clarifying the importance of the free education demand.

This ominous “FEES HAVE NOT FALLEN” profile picture is the final and longest running profile picture to date. The text suggests that the protest has not ended and the organization will continue to fight for free education.

This picture like all the profile picture creates its own identity and is unique in its representation. This is the first time we are shown fire from UWC FWF, unlike the multiple pictures published by the mass media that featured the burning of buildings and university property during the UWC FWF protest. This fire is small and contained and at ground level. The insignificance of the fire is further emphasized by the material that is burnt, it can be assumed that it is a light material such as paper that is being burnt. This small fire does not give the impression that it will cause harm or destruction but merely exists to make a statement.

The people in the background are not given an identity, they are represented by their black pants and black shoes. These people could represent anyone or everyone that has been featured in the identity of UWC FWF thus far. The people in this picture can be the anonymous bodies that were featured in the first and second profile picture, their faces have been excluded and we cannot see their identity. The people in the picture can also be the school children from the

third profile picture, the clothing is similar to that of a school uniform. The people in the picture can be the students and UWC FWF followers, from profile pictures four, five and six and lastly it can be the outsourced workers that were referenced in the seventh profile picture, the clothes in the picture is similar to the uniform of the outsourced worker. The people represented in this profile picture can be any one of the above groups or it can include past students, present students, future students and workers who were never able to become students. The black and white effect blurs the representation of time between past and present but it also allows for this picture to include all time periods in the same manner that it includes all the people affected by the UWC FWF and the national Fees Must Fall movement.

The message is one that suggests continuation, the organization has not reached their goal, “FEES HAVE NOT FALLEN” and indicates, through the image of the fire, that as an organization they are still fighting, they are still motivated to fight, they have not stopped and their desire is still burning.

### **5.3 Cover Photo**

The cover photo (figure 5.1) is a larger image positioned at the top of the Facebook profile. The cover photo covers the top part of a profile similar to a background image. The image is situated behind the profile picture and username and does not extend further than the username and profile picture.

The cover photo feature was designed for a user to display a unique image that represents “who you are and what you care about” (Facebook, 2004). The cover photo does not serve the same purpose as a profile picture, it is not an identification marker. The cover photo is an opportunity for a user or group to display more personal information about themselves. Facebook users have opted to display cover photos of beautiful landscapes, inspirational quotes, group photos with family or friends or pictures that capture important events in their lives.

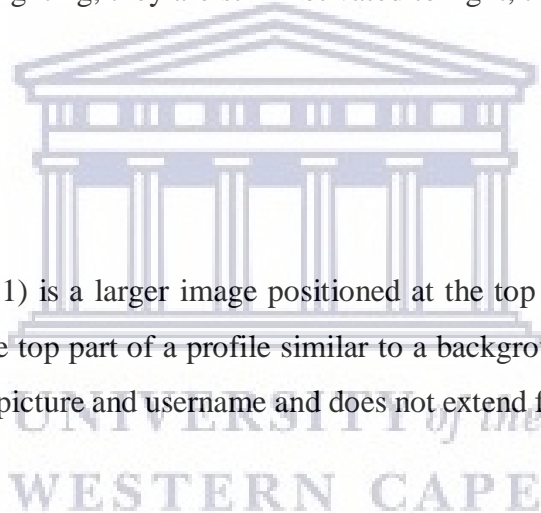




Figure 5. 5 All the Cover photos from the UWC FWF Facebook page

The first Cover photo was also set as the Profile picture for UWC FWF from day one too day eleven. This picture was then set as the Cover picture for a total of eight days.

The second Cover photo is a picture of a peaceful march on campus. The aerial view shows a group of people walking together, some of the participants are holding placards but the viewer is unable the messages on the placards. The colour red is also prevalent in this picture as seen in the Profile pictures. This picture was used on the Facebook feature that allows the user to express what they care about. UWC FWF chose a picture of a peaceful march, a picture that is the opposite of the type of pictures the mass media has published about their gatherings, as previously shown. In the pictures published in the media, the UWC FWF protests are portrayed as destructive, violent and laden with the presence of fire and police as the opposition. This picture was posted after the official shutdown of the university and was the Cover Photo for three days.

The third and fourth Cover photos are similar in context, the pictures continue the theme of mass gathering images. Both pictures feature large crowds that fill the student centre. In both pictures the images give the perception that the numbers of attendees were so many that there

was a lack of space and participants had to fill all available space of the student centre to be able to attend. This picture shows the growth of the organization compared to the amount of participants in the second Cover photo. In the third picture, the students are seen wearing the colours of the different student organizations on campus, the coming together of these organizations shows unity and support for UWC FWF. In the fourth picture, the crowd is making the same gesture, in response to what the speaker is saying, again showing unity and support for UWC FWF. These pictures also give the viewer a closer look at the crowd, it is not an aerial view of the crowd unlike the previous picture and Profile pictures. The pictures draw the viewer in, closer to becoming a participant of the mass meeting. Both Cover photos were set during the shutdown period, the third picture was set for six days and the fourth picture for four days. The images of these activities also give the impression that the shutdown of the university has not stopped UWC FWF from holding mass meetings and has not hindered their growth in support through the representation of the large crowds in the pictures. The pictures are used as an update for followers to see the activity happening in the physical space.

The fifth Cover photo features a protest march outside of the UWC campus. At the start of the Fees Must Fall movement there were many marches to parliament, with students from all the tertiary institutions joining together in these marches to parliament. In this picture the constitution, specifically regarding the right to education is referenced. The banner which is placed ahead of the crowd is clearly visible for the reader to read. The message on the banner relates to the free education demand from the Fees Must Fall movement. The crowd is shown making reference to the traditional *toi-toi* protest culture of dancing and singing in South Africa. This Cover photo was set for sixteen days. Using a picture that moves the focus away from UWC can be seen as a confirmation of alignment with the national Fees Must Fall movement. A picture that reminds the viewer that the protest at UWC are part of the national movement and that the need for free education also affects all students from other institutions.

A volatile interaction between police and students during a protest is the picture used for the sixth Cover photo. The black and white picture features a police squad charging towards a group of students. A small group of students cowering and huddling together as a larger group of police officers head towards them. The students can be identified by their dress code and also because this is taking place at the university, we can assume that these are students. The group of police officers approach the students with shields and guns. On the right of the photo, a police officer is firing a shot at the students. In the photo, the students are unarmed. They are seen positioned behind dustbins arguably for protection and using each other as human shields.



The positions of the students indicates fear and uncertainty towards the approaching police. The police on the other hand, appear as though they are powerful, walking up right, next to each other, strongly approaching the group ahead of them. In this photo there is a clear depiction of victims and attackers. The students are shown as vulnerable, unarmed and being approached by a group of armed, shielded, powerful police. This interaction took place at UWC as the place can be identified. This protest occurred in Residence Way near to the Liberty Residence, with the UWC sports stadium visible in the background.

The narratives in this picture are created through visible and invisible vectors (Kress & Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 1996). The picture is a close up shot of the interaction between police and students. The angle of the picture draws the viewer in (Kress & Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 1996) because the picture is taken from the angle behind the students. Their backs are facing the camera, which allows the viewer to 'see' the oncoming police in like fashion to the protesters. This allows for the viewer of the picture to become part of the group of protesters that is under attack, creating less distance between the students and the viewer (Kress & Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 1996). We cannot see the facial expressions of the protesters or the situation behind them but we can see the approaching police in front of them. We can see that the police are approaching with shields and guns and their facial expressions are serious and angry. In this photo, police appear agentive, aggressive and mobile, a stark contrast to the defenceless appearance of the protesters. This picture is an example of what Olesen (2015) terms "injustice symbols", it is the "iconic representations of unjustified violence by authorities" (Olesen, 2015 as cited in Neumayer and Rossi, 2018:4305). The images of violence against activist by police supports the discourses of police injustice.

This picture is not a picture from a past protest; this is a picture from the 2015/2016 UWC FWF protest. The current landmarks of the university can be identified in the picture. A colour version of this picture is also available in the photos application of this page. Notably, the black and white effect has been added to the photo, which arguably imbues it with gravitas owed to a protest era in UWC's past which is revered as critical to the transformation of the university (Lalu, 2012).

In particular, the filtered black and white photo resemiotizes (Iedema, 2003) the 1970's and 1980's anti-apartheid protests at the university, when the students demanded fair and equal education. The protests during this period lead to the closing of the university during both those

periods (Lalu, 2012). The cover photo utilizes an emotive image and makes historical reference to the history of the university (Neumayer & Rossi, 2018). The use of this image allows for the protesters to arguably add more meaning and depth to their cause and organization by linking themselves to a historical event that has shaped the history of the university.

The black and white effect may arguably be said to reposition and realign the current struggle with UWC's struggle history and its fight against oppression and exclusion. The past protests are therefore recreated (Prior & Hengst, 2010; Banda & Jimaima, 2015) and become part of the UWC FWF current protests. Moreover, it can be argued that the use of this black and white picture extends the time and space of this protest into the past and is simultaneously creating the message that the past protest has not ended. All the discourses related to the previous protest is now associated to the FWF protest with the use of this image. In this way, I argue that a simple filter option (from colour to black and white) can be analyzed chronotopically as it indexes a time long gone, yet skilfully placed in the current protest.

Unlike the previous Cover photos that were set for a few days at a time, this protest picture was the Cover Photo for eight months and eleven days.

The last and current Cover photo lists a number of other movements. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2016, the last and current Cover photo was set. A simplistic picture with a white background with black text that lists three movements, namely Black Radical Feminism, Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness is featured. The FMF movement as a whole, "not only challenged university policies, but also the State, under the ideological banners of Pan-Africanism, Black Consciousness, Black radical feminism, queer theories and decolonisation" (Xaba, 2017:96). A different type of picture from the previous Cover photos, which predominantly feature protest moments, this picture demonstrates the manner in which UWC FWF aimed to expand their footprint and their relevance to other movements.

The inclusion of the Black Radical Feminism movement makes the reference that UWC FWF supports and includes the ideologies of this movement. In their aim to achieve free education they are also fighting against the "racialized construction of sexuality," (Higginbotham, 1992 as cited in Taylor, 1998:18) of black woman, addressing the issues around the oppression of woman of colour. UWC FWF have a female member in their leadership, showing the practice of their support and agreement with the ideologies of the Black Radical Feminism movement.

The second movement that UWC FWF associate themselves with is the Pan-Africanism movement. The Pan-Africanism movement briefly, is a movement with the philosophy to unify all native Africans and people of African descent in their struggle “against oppression and for liberation” (Adi & Sherwood, 2003:vii). The movement promotes unity through shared experiences and promotes equal rights and self-governance through the liberation from slavery, colonialism and racism. The inclusion of the ideologies of this movement renders the idea that UWC FWF is inclusive of all people that have been affected by racism, colonialism and a form of oppression.

The Black Consciousness Movement as the “initial step towards liberation is to abandon the frame of reference to our oppressors, and create new concepts which will release our reality” (Pityana, 2005). The movement seeks to change the policy that divides black people through highlighting their differences, creating the divide and rule of black people. They aim of the movement is to instil the belief of liberation through awareness and self-knowledge (Pityana, 2005), drawing on the teaching of Steve Biko, who stated that the strength of black people lie in their uniqueness and that, along with unity, is their weapon to fight against oppression and their oppressors (Biko, 1971). UWC FWF references the Black Consciousness movement as it assimilates with many of the ideologies of the UWC FWF movement such as the call for decolonialized education and the end of oppression of black students.

The use of this picture as the UWC FWF Cover photo creates an association between the UWC FWF movement and the listed movements in the picture. The association creates a link that allows for UWC FWF to lend credibility by showing their support and shared ideologies of the mentioned organizations and gaining support from the followers of these movements in return. The creation of this connection also extends the footprint of UWC FWF, these movements have national and international roots, making a national and international growth and following for UWC FWF possible.

#### **5.4 Summary**

In this chapter the introduction features, namely the Username, Profile picture and Cover photo, of the UWC FWF Facebook page were examined, the analysis focused on the use of the Facebook features in the construction of the organizations online identity.

The analysis revealed that the name of the national organization, Fees Must Fall, was changed when the UWC division of the organization was created online. The name change from Fees Must Fall to UWC Fess WILL Fall indicated an independent identity from that of the national organization. The new name indicated a more aggressive action towards their fight for change, demonstrating that the organization is determined to achieve their listed demands. This independence and the shift away from the national organization was further performed through the construction of their identity in the Profile picture and Cover photos.

As previously stated the Username and the Profile picture on Facebook are the two features that complement each other, the Profile picture is the image form of the Username, meaning that the identity created by the Username is reflected or repeated by in the identity of the Profile picture. The eight pictures used on the UWC FWF Facebook profile show that the identity of the organization was not fixed but their online identity was constructed with the development of the protest in the physical space.

The first two Profile pictures construct an anonymous identity for UWC FWF through the use of the Anonymous Hackers reference and the anonymous bodies in the Wild West themed picture. Although the purpose of protest and the demand for free education is clear, the identity of the organization is performed as anonymous. As this is the chosen identity of the organization at the start of the protest, it can be assumed that the organization at UWC was still finding their place within the movement, unsure and not confident about their role or contribution to the greater protest. It can also be assumed that UWC FWF assumed an anonymous identity afraid of the consequences of starting a protest at UWC. Profile picture three shows a future identity with the image of school children who represent future member of the UWC FWF organization and future university students. The picture is used at a time when restrictions are placed on the organization in the physical landscape through the shutdown of the university. The third Profile picture serves as motivation for the followers of UWC FWF to continue their fight amidst the university's attempt to silence them.

UWC becomes more visible and identifiable in the construction of the UWC FWF identity from the fourth Profile picture onwards. The fourth Profile picture was posted during an intense protest period, during which the mass media were publishing protest pictures of UWC FWF that showed violence, destruction of university property and the burning of university buildings and equipment. This Profile picture, posted at the same time, showed a peaceful protest and unity among followers. This picture shows a reactionary response to the identity the mass media

was portraying of UWC FWF, this picture contradicts the violent and destructive identity from the one created by the mass media. The contradiction of identity continued with the fifth profile picture. This picture features a single person waiting, the identity is peaceful, calm and passive, an opposing image to the mass gatherings and protest pictures from the mass media. The identity of UWC FWF continues with an identity that portrays the organization as victims with reference from past protests. An image of a woman in fear, danger and hurt is used as the identity of the organization. This black and white picture draws on the narratives of past protest that showed participants of the protests as victims. They create the message that the people fight for their cause become the victims of violence by police or authority. This identity contradicts the identity of the university, who at the same time were discouraging protests at the start of the new academic year, asking for students to not repeat the protests from the previous year. The use of this picture at the start of the academic year responds to the university's message saying that UWC FWF are the victims in this situation and are being treated in the same manner as victims from past protests.

The construction of the UWC FWF identity on Facebook continues with the challenge of the identity of the university in the seventh Profile picture. This Profile picture uses the sculpture from the UWC landscape to construct their online identity. They recreate the sculpture to create a new meaning, one that opposes and challenges the meaning of the original sculpture. By changing a symbol of the identity of the university UWC FWF nullifies and contradicts that identity with the new sculpture. The last picture is an image that is all inclusive, the image represents all the people that have been referenced in the construction of the UWC FWF identity up until that point. The identity of the black shoes and black pants can belong to the school children, the students, the outsourced worker and the protesters from past protests. The last Profile picture delivers an ominous message that the UWC FWF protests have not ended their fight for free education, even though there are no protests happening in the physical space, again contradicting the idea that protests have ended.

UWC FWF used the Facebook feature that is designed for the user to show “who you are and what you care about” (Facebook, 2004), with the majority of the pictures being mass meeting pictures. The first Cover photo, similar to the Profile picture, represents anonymity. The picture change and specifically show the mass gatherings of UWC FWF, the pictures show their high numbers of support, their unity and their peaceful protest practices, giving the viewer the impression that this is who they are and not the representation of a violent destructive organization like the one constructed in the mass media. The black and white Cover photo also

adds the message that the organization are victims in these protest similar to the victims from past protests by reconstructing images that draw on past narratives of violence from police against student protesters. Ending their identity with an association to other movements to which they assimilate and agree with. The inclusion of other movements expands their footprint but also shows that the values and beliefs of those organizations are also values and beliefs that they share.

The Profile picture shows the evolution of the protests in the physical space, an evolution that becomes more of a matching identity to the name of the organization. The online identity of UWC FWF started as a generic protest identity and evolved with every phase in the evolution of the protest in the physical space, clearly showing the various phases of the organization in the construction of their identity. Each of the pictures used as the Profile picture reflects the time period and the events of the physical space, the anonymity in the beginning that then changes and becomes more representative of the identity of the UWC FWF protest that is specific to UWC. It deals with specific issues that are experienced by UWC students. The representation of time and space in the construction of the identity of the protest includes other time periods such as past protests of the university and the country and the future of the university with the image of the school children as future students, drawing on past and future narratives in the construction of their identity (Agha, 2007). The identity of UWC FWF also draws on the physical landscape and the events that have occurred in the landscape is then remediated and used to create a different message online, such as the image of the sculpture or the recreation of past protest events through the black and white effect on the mass meeting pictures from current protest events.

The use of social media in the online protest illustrates how UWC FWF used the features of this platform to negotiate their identities that was previously dependant on the mass media. In the past, the main source of distributing information and reporting of events were through the mass media. The affordance of social media and the ability for UWC FWF to control their page themselves and publish their own information to the public has afforded them the opportunity to construct their own identity that in some cases challenges their identity created by the mass media and the authority which they challenge.

## Chapter Six

### The Construction of the UWC Fees WILL Fall Community

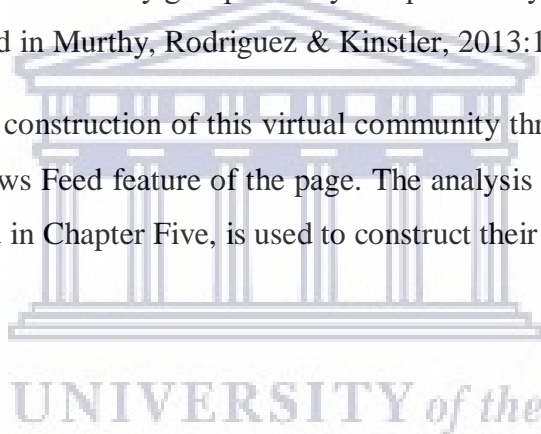
#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the build of a community in the virtual space, by drawing on Anderson's (1983) notion of imagined communities. UWC FWF have used Facebook, a virtual platform on which to construct their protest community. The study of UWC FWF online as an imagined community is relevant as Appadurai (1996, as cited in Kanno & Norton, 2003) argues that imagination in modern times have evolved due to the inclusion and advances of modern technology and mass migration influencing the possibilities of imagined communities. The formation of virtual communities is "providing new, inclusive spaces for underrepresented minorities to communicate and solidify group identity and potentially increase representation" (Papacharissi, 2008 as cited in Murthy, Rodriguez & Kinstler, 2013:1005).

This chapter examines the construction of this virtual community through analysing the page type and the use of the News Feed feature of the page. The analysis considers how the UWC FWF identity, as examined in Chapter Five, is used to construct their community identity.

#### 6.1 Community Page

The UWC FWF Facebook page is a Community page. Facebook defines Community Pages as "a new type of Facebook page dedicated to a topic or experience that is owned collectively by the community connected to it. Just like Official Pages for businesses, organizations and public figures, Community Pages let you connect with others who share similar interests and experiences" (Facebook.com, 2004). UWC FWF is using this platform to create a virtual community for their organization.



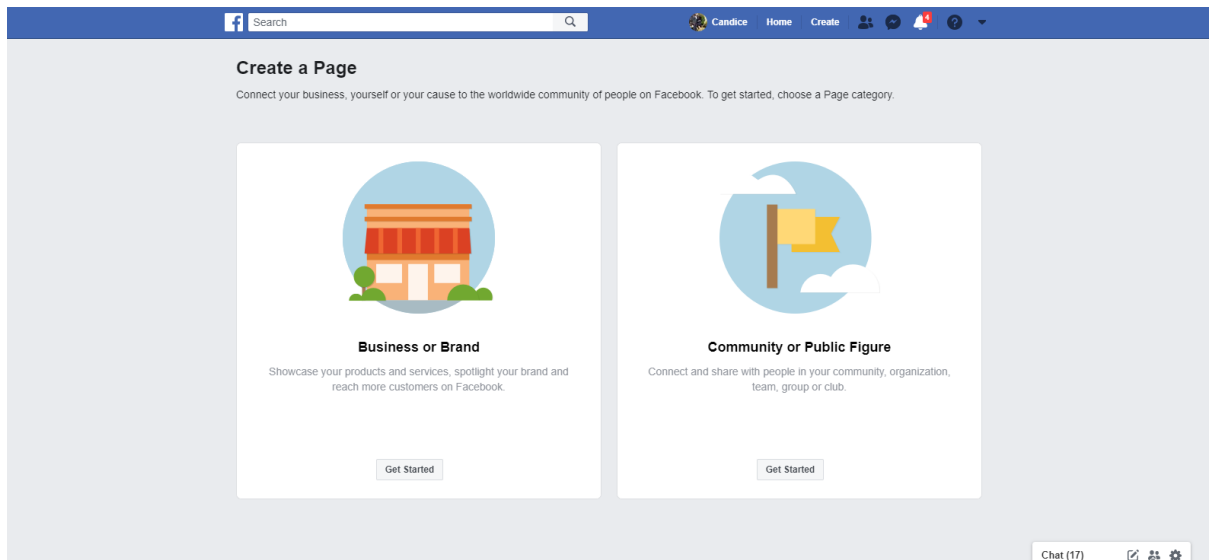


Figure 6. 1 A screenshot of the Facebook page options

“Virtual community refers to group memberships and overall group identification. Group membership in virtual worlds is considered to serve as the primary gateway to belonging to a larger community” (Riberio, 2009 as cited in Nagy & Koles, 2014:284). The definition of a Community page on Facebook is for people who have the same beliefs to have a platform to connect (Facebook.com, 2004). The concept of a community page aligns with the definition of a virtual community, creating a space where members of that community is able to become part of a collective that share beliefs and ideologies. Their followers are able to feel that they are entering an environment that is safe and secure. They are joining a group of like-minded people who have the same wants and needs as them. They become motivated to achieve their collective goals when supported and surrounded by others who have the same beliefs. Papacharissi (2008 as cited in Murthy, Rodriguez & Kinstler, 2013:1005) found that the emergence of online communities is “providing new, inclusive spaces for underrepresented minorities to communicate and solidify group identity and potentially increase representation”.

In the salience (Kress & van Leeuwen, Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design, 2006) of the layout of the page, there are a few supporting modes that add to the visual creation of the virtual community, such as the presence of the word “Home” that is featured below the word “Community” reinforcing the ideology of a Community. Home is the place that is safe, secure and an individual’s personal space within a community. Having a home within a community also reinforces the sense of belonging, supporting the idea that the follower has made the right choice to become part of this community. The inclusion process is further



supported by the feature that shows a list of the users Facebook friends that have also joined this community. It reinforces the users decision in a positive manner, it shows the user that they are not alone, they have joined a community that their friends and acquaintances have also joined. This feature shows a user that they are doing the same thing as other like-minded people. On Facebook a user can also invite their other Facebook friends to “like” this page. In its introduction, this feature was just a written suggestion as seen in figure 5.1, with the updates of Facebook this feature has improved to give users the option of clicking on the suggestion, the “Invite your friends” feature and one click opens the users friends list and allows a user to start inviting your Facebook friends that have not yet joined the page (Facebook.com, 2004). This can be viewed as an online performance of campaigning. By joining the Page “individuals who are part of social movements and political groups can build relationships with their peers, receive information regarding mobilizations, and also be exposed to different sources of content that can promote engagement with their causes” (Kobayashi, Ikeda, & Miyata, 2006 as cited in Valenzuela et al, 2014:2048). This allows for users to become affiliated to the organization, by joining the UWC FWF Facebook page. It creates the opportunity to invite other interested people to also join the organization. The formation and maintenance of social aspects of virtual identity stems from the integration into a virtual community, as virtual communities function as essential mechanisms of “enculturation” by providing a sense of belonging and social feedback to the members of that community (Steinkuehler, 2006 as cited in Nagy & Koles, 2014:284).



## **6.2 News Feed**

The News Feed on a virtual community page is the same concept to that of a community noticeboard. It is a place where news and information that is relevant to the community is shared and consumed. Modan (2007 as cited in Peck and Banda, 2014) states that a community is defined by its social networks and a neighbourhood is differentiated geographically. This means that the social networks of a community can be measured through its noticeboards. The geographical reach of the community can also be understood by the noticeboards, meaning that noticeboards provide insight into both the community and neighbourhood. Peck and Banda (2014) state that if a noticeboard is considered a “site” in a geographical area which is considered to be a neighbourhood (space), the social practices of a place such as a community will be visible.

Burke et al (2011) categorized the News Feed as a passive consumption form of communication on Facebook. It is the place where broadcasting takes place and, in some cases, leads to directed communication. The News Feed is “the constantly updating list of stories in the middle of your home page. ‘The News Feed contains general broadcasts, such as status updates, links, and photos, as well as public interactions between the user’s friends and those friends’ friends’ (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011), Pages and groups that you follow on Facebook” (Facebook.com, 2004). Before joining a group or Page, the notification of your Facebook Friends joining a Group or Page will appear on your News Feed. Once a Facebook user joins a Group or follows a Page, the status updates, photos and videos from that Group or Page will appear on your News Feed along with the content from your Facebook friends. The consumption of information, without interaction, from the News Feed is known as passive consumption (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011).

Passive consumption of a News Feed changes when a user interacts with the posts on the News Feed. A directed form of communication that is associated with bonding and bridging social capital takes place. Directed communication can occur in the form of “chat”, “message”, “tag” or “like”. These features represent personal communication, the user is showing agreement, familiarity and a maintenance of relationship (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011).

The content that is published on the News Feed is the broadcasted information. Broadcasting is done by the author and passive consumption of the broadcasted information, is done by the receiver (Burke , Kraut, & Marlow, 2011).

Passive consumption also becomes directed communication when a user interacts with a post, Group or Page. The most common forms of engagement are the “like or reaction” features, “comment” and “share”. These features are part of every post on Facebook. The contributions of research into noticeboards “may yield deeper understanding of the people using space, and may provide new understandings of particular communities and their challenges” (Peck and Banda, 2014:377)

### **6.3 Posts**

Peck and Banda (2014:361) used the poststructuralist framework by Baxter (2002) and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) to examine the “discursive formations (i.e. texts, posters, notices)” found on noticeboards in their study of space making and community in Observatory.

Their study focused on the construction of identity through examining posters, notices and other texts found on the noticeboards in Observatory. This study of the UWC FWF News Feed as a noticeboard considers the posts, on the News Feed, as notices which are made up of texts, posters and notices like the ones found on noticeboards in the physical space as seen in the study conducted by Peck and Banda (2014). The posts on the UWC FWF Facebook page (the notices on the noticeboard) make up the data in the continuation of the analysis in the study examining the construction of the UWC FWF community identity. In like fashion to Peck and Banda (2014) this study will examine the identity construction of UWC FWF through the resources drawn upon in the formation of their posts to their followers and the public.

“A Facebook status is a feature that allows users to post and share a small amount of content on their profile” (techopedia.com, 2019). A status update is similar to that of a notice on a noticeboard in the real world. On SNS the News Feed is the noticeboard and the status updates are the notices on the noticeboard. A status update appears on a user’s News Feed and is made up of texts, images, videos and links (Facebook.com, 2004). “User’s often use this space for updates about their day or to post clever quips; website, video and photos can also be shared this way” (technopedia.com, 2019). After a status update has been posted, it is also referred to as a post. The status update will further be referred to as posts.

### **6.3.1 Participation Posts**

CMC is used as a means to increase participation for mobilization (Mercea, 2011). CMC is used to publicize and disperse information about mobilization. Facebook has played a significant role in dispersing information to a large amount of people for mobilization for protest participation (Lee, 2018). The candlelight vigils in South Korea, discussed previously, is a recent social movement that used Facebook as their primary platform to gain participation (Lee, 2018). Participation posts are created with the idea to attract like minded people to the organization or event. These are the messages that create the building of the community and hold the community together. The analysis of participation posts analyzes the UWC FWF call for mobilization and examines how the organization created a continuity of the construction of their online identity in these posts.



Figure 6. 2 A screenshot of a UWC FWF post on 20 October 2015

Figure 6.2 is a post inviting followers to a mass meeting on 21 October 2015. This post was posted on 20 October 2015, and details all the necessary information followers need such as date, time, place and agenda. The post features the name #UWCFeesWILLFall Movement that is specific to UWC as previously shown. This post also uses the same image as Profile Picture number two. The image of the lynching of the bodies from the words student debt is placed next to the agenda of the meeting, giving an indication that this topic is on the agenda or related to the purpose of the meeting. The image is disturbing and serious with the use of the hanging bodies and adds that tone to the meeting. The use of this image on this post at the same time that the image is used on the profile picture is an extension of the identity of the organization during that period. The identity is replicated with the black and white colour and the red is again featured in small accents like blood dripping from the word “debt” onto the bodies.

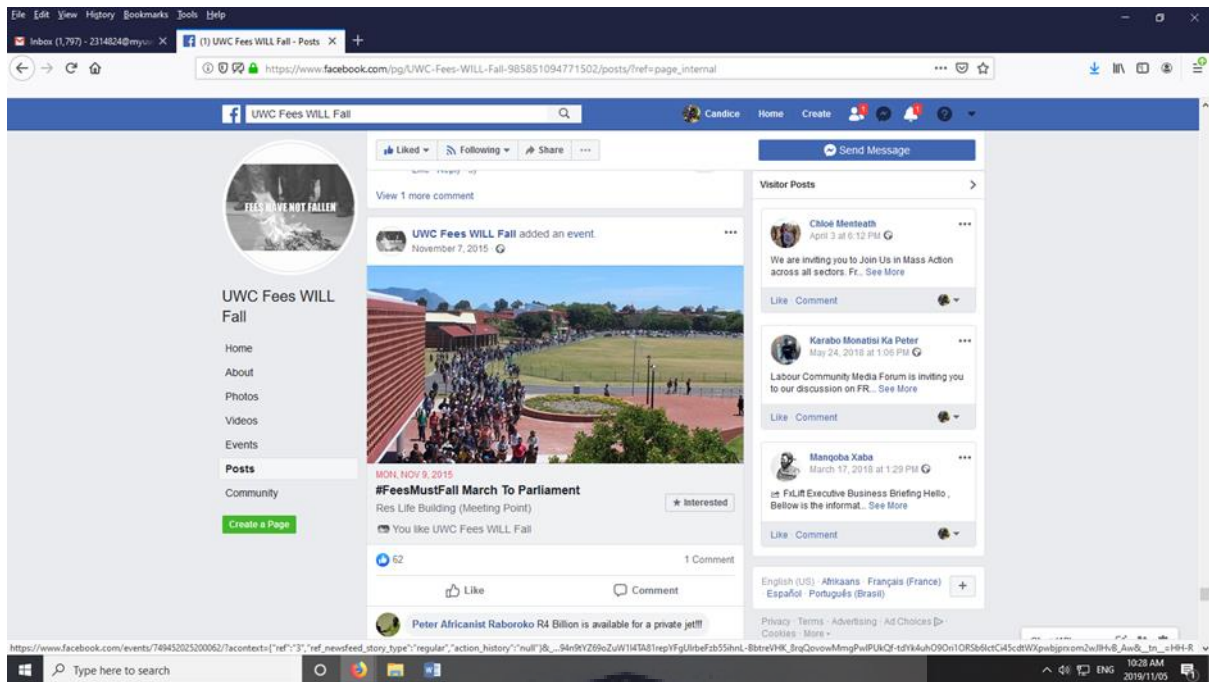


Figure 6.3 A screenshot of a post on 7 November 2015

Figure 6.3 is a participation post for a Fees Must Fall march to parliament. The information of this post is posted as part of the larger Fees Must Fall Movement with the use of the #FeesMustFall. The marches to parliament during this protest period included all the tertiary institutions in the province and was not exclusive to one institution. The post details all the necessary information such as the date, time, and meeting place. The picture used in this post is of a march that took place at UWC. The university can be identified by the landscape and by the unique red brick of the buildings. This picture of a peaceful march references the second Cover photo that was used on the UWC FWF Facebook page during this time period. Cover photo number two was a picture of a peaceful march by a large group of supporters around the campus. Similar to the Cover photo, students are shown peacefully walking together in solidarity with no images of violence or destruction occurring during their march. The use of this similar image in a call for participation in a march to parliament delivers the same kind of identity as that of the Cover photo and creates an extension of the identity of the Cover photo. Both of the images create the identity that the UWC FWF organization conducts peaceful protests. They are able to march around the university as a peaceful and unified group.

The use of the image of peaceful march at UWC connects the virtual community with the real community in the physical space through the use of a recognizable landscape. The author of these posts (including the Cover photo) is telling the viewer that the virtual community and the

physical community is one and the same, solidifying the authenticity of the virtual community through its connection to the physical community.



Figure 6. 4 A post on 12 January 2016

In the construction of their identity through the Profile Pictures and the Cover photos, UWC FWF used pictures that referenced the protest history of UWC. They used pictures of mass gatherings in the student centre and other areas of campus and would add a colour effect that would make the picture look like it is an old protest picture from past protests drawing in the narratives of those protests.

In this participation post, figure 6.4, a picture of a mass gathering is used, this gathering is also taking place in the UWC student centre like the mass gatherings in some of the pictures used for the Profile pictures and Cover photos. The picture shows a packed student centre with student singing and dancing to what we can assume is protest songs. A colour effect has been added to the picture to give it an old look blurring the time of the picture and making reference to old protests, again drawing on the past narratives of the protest history of the university. The colour red is also used in the picture in the text featuring the name of the organization and the purpose of the gathering. The remainder of the necessary information is in white text with added hashtags that signal other associations of the organizations e.g. #FeesMustFallReloaded

was used at the start of the new academic year in 2016 when protests were restarted from the previous year. #Asinamali meaning we have no money, this slogan was used throughout the Fees Must Fall protest nationally and was a slogan that was used by anti-apartheid activists during the anti-apartheid protests. #SizofundaNgenkani meaning we are going to be educated by force, added to the seriousness and determination for a result by UWC FWF. #FreeEducationNOW, this was the primary demand of the Fees Must Fall movement and was also iterated during their protest and the reason for their continuation of protests.



Figure 6. 5 A post on 3 February 2016



Figure 6. 6 A post on 15 February 2016

Figures 6.5 and 6.6 were both previously used as Profile Pictures in the construction of the UWC FWF identity on their Facebook page. These Profile pictures have been remediated/reused as participation posts. These participation posts were published at the start of the 2016 academic year when the UWC FWF movement restarted their protests for that year. Both of these images are emotive images that send strong messages to the viewers about the current protest and relate these messages to past protest of the university and the country through the use of the black and white colour effect and the use of the colour red in the protest images, as seen in the analysis in Chapter five. The meaning created by these images are reused for the purpose of gaining participation. The messages of these images are used as the reason for why people should participate in the protest, these images send messages that UWC

students can relate to and become a relatable and understandable reason for why students from UWC should participate in the protest. The images reinforce the message that students are still waiting for free education, Figure 6.5 and that the students are victims, victims of the protest and victims of the consequences of tertiary education fees, Figure 6.6.

The UWC FWF restarted their protest in the new year with an identity that was a continuation of the identity from the previous year. They used narratives that are specific to UWC and the history of the university that their followers, as UWC students, would understand and be familiar with. The use of these images as participation is an extension of the identity of UWC FWF, the images represent the reasons and purpose of the protest and in this from, the participation post, is used as the reason to solicit participation for protest.

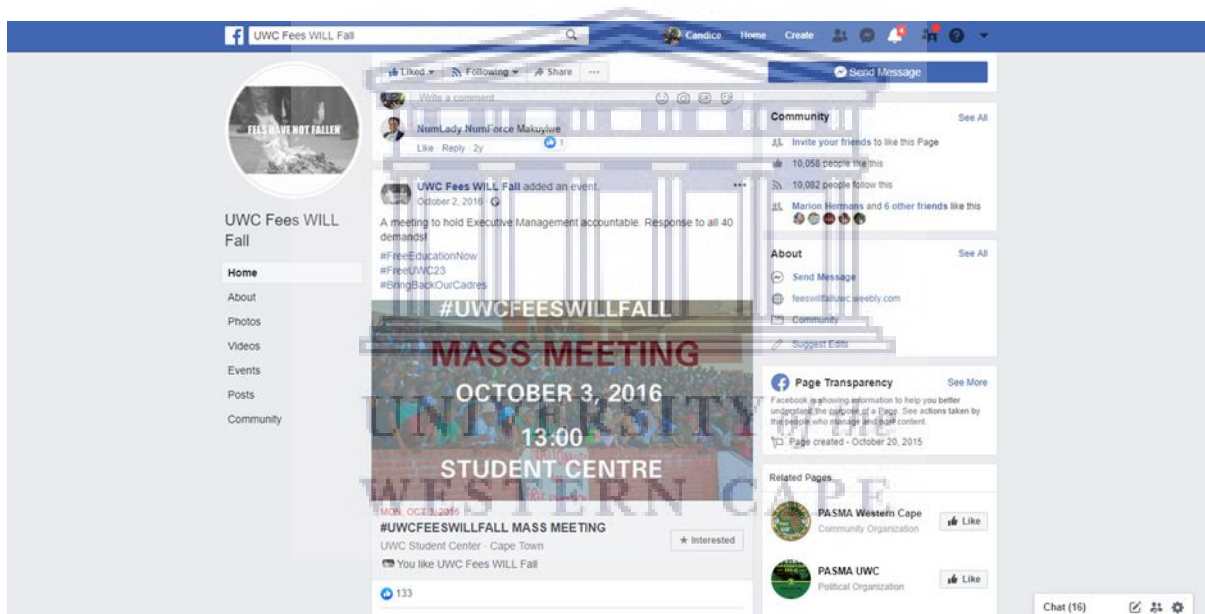


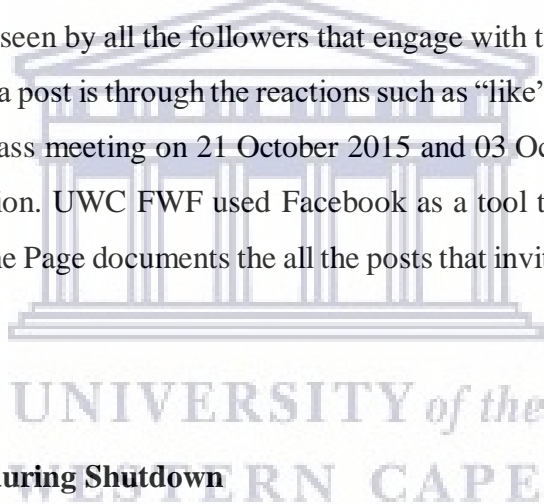
Figure 6. 7 A screenshot of a post on 2 October 2016

Not all participation posts were created with the used of Profile pictures but other images that make reference to protests were also used, such as the image in Figure 6.7. The image that forms the background of this participation posts is of a large crowd that filled the UWC stadium. The image is of a gathering that is peaceful. The students are all standing as though they are listening to a speaker in front of them, making similar gestures in agreement. There is a single banner hanging in front of the students that appears to read as “nationalize or free education now”. The text on the image does not completely block the image. The white text gives the name of the organization “#UWCFESSWILLFALL” which means that this meeting



was call by UWC FWF and is not a national meeting. Other information such as date, time and place is also in white but the reason for gathering is in red text. UWC FWF has featured the colour red in many of their pictures that draw on the protest narrative as discussed in chapter five, it is also interesting to note that they always refer to their protests as mass meeting and not as a protest, reinforcing the peaceful, non-violent, non- destructive agenda, contradicting the messages of the mass media that term their gatherings as protests.

The above posts show that the role of CMC in protests allows for unaffiliated and affiliated to gain the necessary information needed to attend a protest event (Mercea, 2011). Unaffiliated would require more information to aid their decision-making process to attend a protest. Mercea (2011) concluded that CMC increased participation from affiliated and unaffiliated participants in the different types of protests examined in the study. The use of Facebook for increasing participation affords followers the ease of access to information and visible interaction with the post is seen by all the followers that engage with the Page and engage with the post. Engagement with a post is through the reactions such as “like”, “share” and comments. The posts from both the mass meeting on 21 October 2015 and 03 October 2016 documents a large amount of participation. UWC FWF used Facebook as a tool to inform their followers about all their meetings. The Page documents the all the posts that invites followers to meetings held by UWC FWF.



### **6.3.2 Facebook Activity during Shutdown**

After a series of protests in both 2015 and 2016, all academic activity was suspended and no students and staff were allowed to enter the campus. In 2015, there was a national shutdown of universities on 22 and 23 October (Maringira & Gukurume, 2017). The shutdown of the university placed a restriction on the protests events conducted by UWC FWF. During the shutdown, security was increased and off campus students were not allowed to enter the university premises making it difficult for protest events to take place (Maringira & Gukurume, 2017). The analysis in this section details the use of the UWC FWF Facebook page throughout the protest period with specific focus on the level of activity during the 2015 and 2016 shutdown of the university. Research by Valenzuela *et al.* (2014) that have studied the relationship between the use of SNS in a protest and when in the timeframe of a protest SNS is used, state that the results of their study showed that SNS was used in the beginning stages of a protest and at the end of a protest period. The absence of SNS at the peak of the protest

period was due to the precedence of mass media. Valenzuela *et al.* (2014) illustrated that SNS at the beginning and end of the protest functioned as an information hub for participation, organization and information acquisition. Their study showed that these functions are required at the start and end of a protest. The prime period of the protest is covered by radio, television and newspapers due to the protest events that take place.

However, for UWC FWF, the restriction of the shutdown did not extend to the UWC FWF Facebook page. The graph maps the activity of Page from the inception of the protest to the end of 2017.

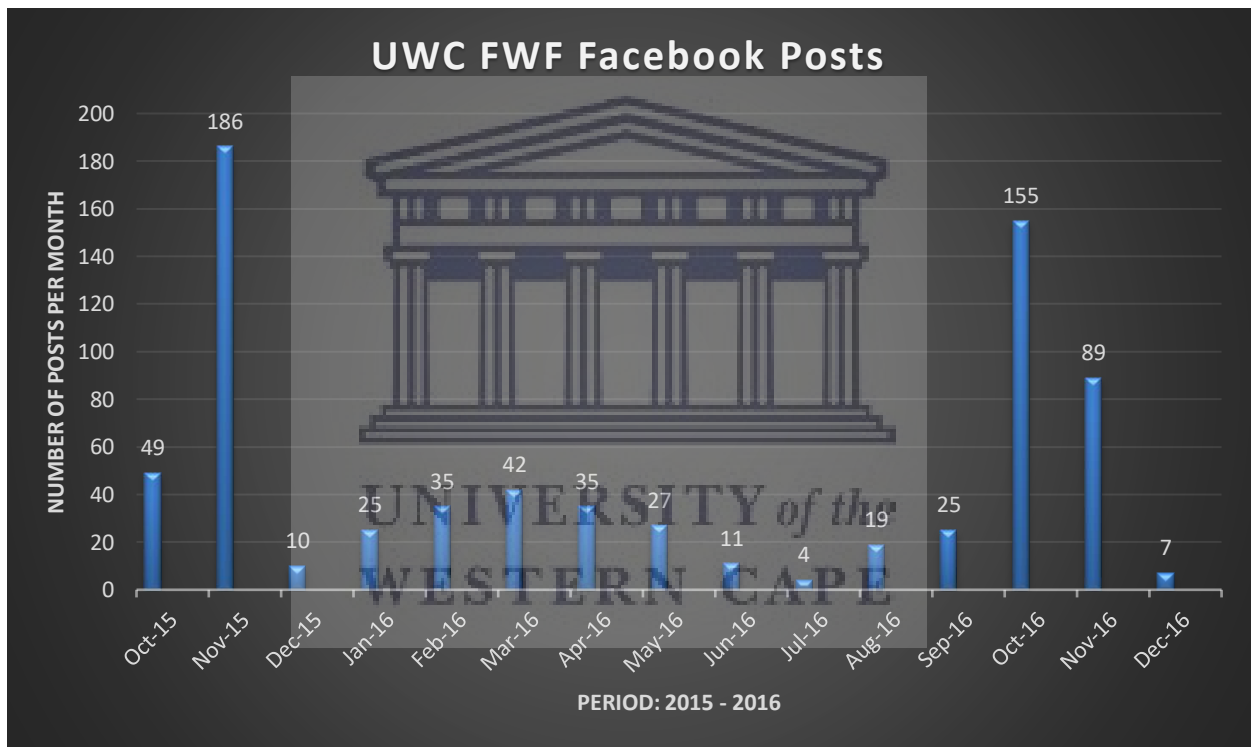


Figure 6. 8 Graph 6.8 Number of posts per month for 2015 and 2016

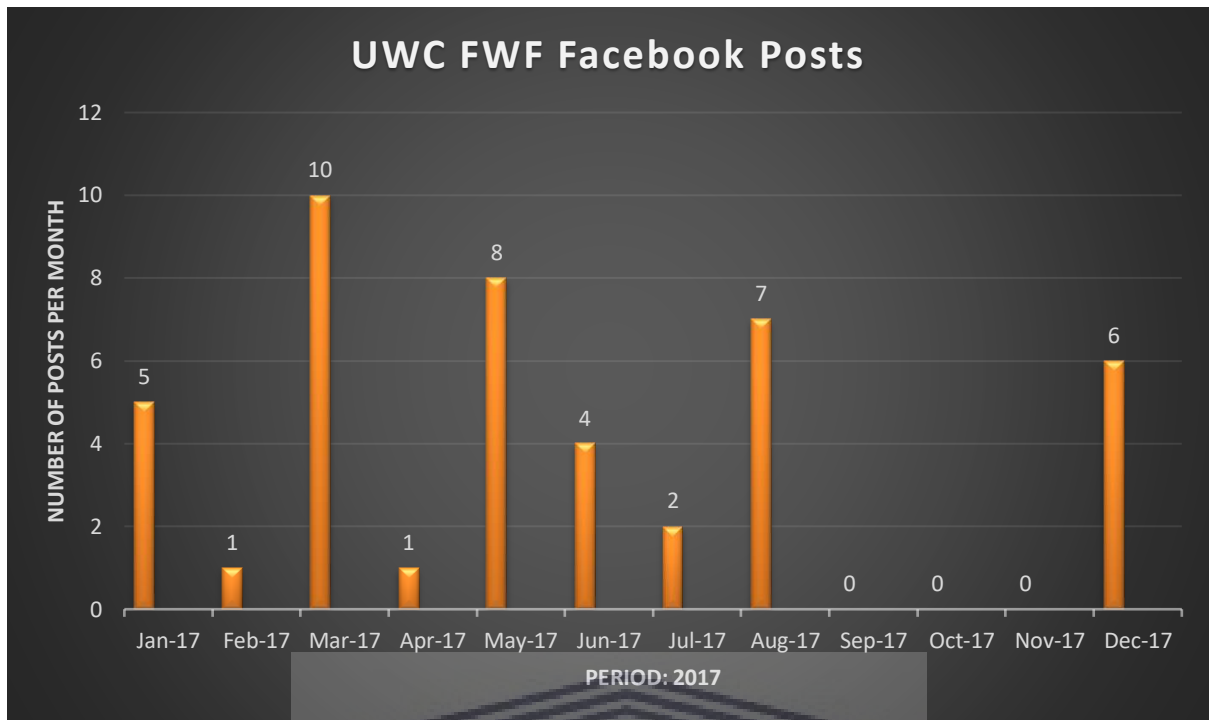


Figure 6.9 Graph 6.9 Number of posts per month for 2017

The 2015, 2016 and 2017 posts were formatted into a graph to illustrate the number of posts per month from the start of the UWC FWF Facebook page to December 2017. The graph documents each month and the number of posts for that month. The graph also shows the increase and decrease in activity over this period.

In the first month of activity, October 2015, the Graph 6.8 shows 49 posts. The number of posts increased in November 2015 to 186 posts. On 12 November there was a total number of 76 posts posted in a single day. The following month shows a rapid decrease to 10 posts for December 2015. In 2016 the posts steadily increase, reaching a small peak of 42 posts in March (see graph 5.15). Activity decreases again until October 2016 with an increase of posts to 155 posts for the month. Posts decrease to 89 posts in November 2016 and only 7 posts were posted in December 2016. For the year 2017, the Graph 6.9, shows very little activity on the UWC FWF Facebook page compared to the previous two years. For the duration of 2017, the highest number of posts for one month is 10 posts in March 2017 (see graph 5.16). This shows a drastic decline in activity compared to the 2015/2016 period.

On 27 September 2016, UWC FWF submitted a memorandum of demands to the university management (Facebook.com, UWC Fees WILL Fall, 2015). The demands were an update of the 2015 Fees WILL Fall demands. UWC FWF continued to conduct mass meetings in

September and October 2016. The university was shutdown again on 4 October 2016 due to protests. The Facebook page documents 155 posts for October, with daily activity recorded. The university remained closed for the remainder of the year and exams were written at a different location in November. The UWC FWF Facebook page shows 89 posts for November and only 10 posts for December 2016. The sharp decline in posts in December could be due to the end of year vacation. Many of the students that are not from the surroundings areas return home for the festive holidays. The university residences was also closed for the December vacations. There is minimal recorded protest activity on the UWC FWF Facebook page for the year 2017, which reflects the minimal activity from the UWC FWF organization.

The online activity during the 2015 and 2016 shutdown, did not stop or decrease during this period, rather it increased, these findings are contradictory to that of Valenzuela *et al.* (2014). October and November 2015 and October 2016 marked a period of intense protests at UWC and recorded the highest number of posts on the UWC FWF Facebook page for those periods. The activity on Facebook did not stop due the constraints on the physical space. The posts do however indicate a decline in December 2015 and 2016, that co-insides with the university vacation. The reason for this decline could be due to the university residence that closes during the academic vacation until the start of the new academic year. The results of online activity during the shutdown of the university indicates the affordance of social media that allows users to continue their offline interests online (Valenzuela *et al.* 2014). This means that social media users are able to maintain their group and individual interest and send and receive information to uphold their interests regardless of the constrictions of their physical space (Valenzuela *et al.* 2014). UWC FWF was able to maintain their group identity on social media and continue their organizations mandate.

### **6.3.3 Information Posts**

The role of a SNS, in a protest, is not restricted to campaigning for participation. A SNS can also be used as an information hub, detailing information about events, fundraisers, request for donations and assistance (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement, and political participation, 2012). At the start of the protest and for the duration of the protest period some of the posts focused on gaining participation for protests events, as previously shown. The data also illustrates that there was

continuous activity on the Page during the shutdown of the university in 2015 and 2016. The posts reveal that the Page was used for other activity, like an information hub.

The other types of posts on the UWC FWF Facebook page covered a variety of topics but the core purpose of these posts remained to publicize information and requests to the followers of their page. The Page was creatively used during the shutdown of the university to communicate with the students that lived at the residence, certain posts were only aimed at these students and not at all the followers of this Page. Figure 6.10 is an example of a post that was aimed at the students that lived on the university residence during the shutdown. The catering services at residence were suspended during the 2016 protests, the students were therefore responsible for feeding themselves.

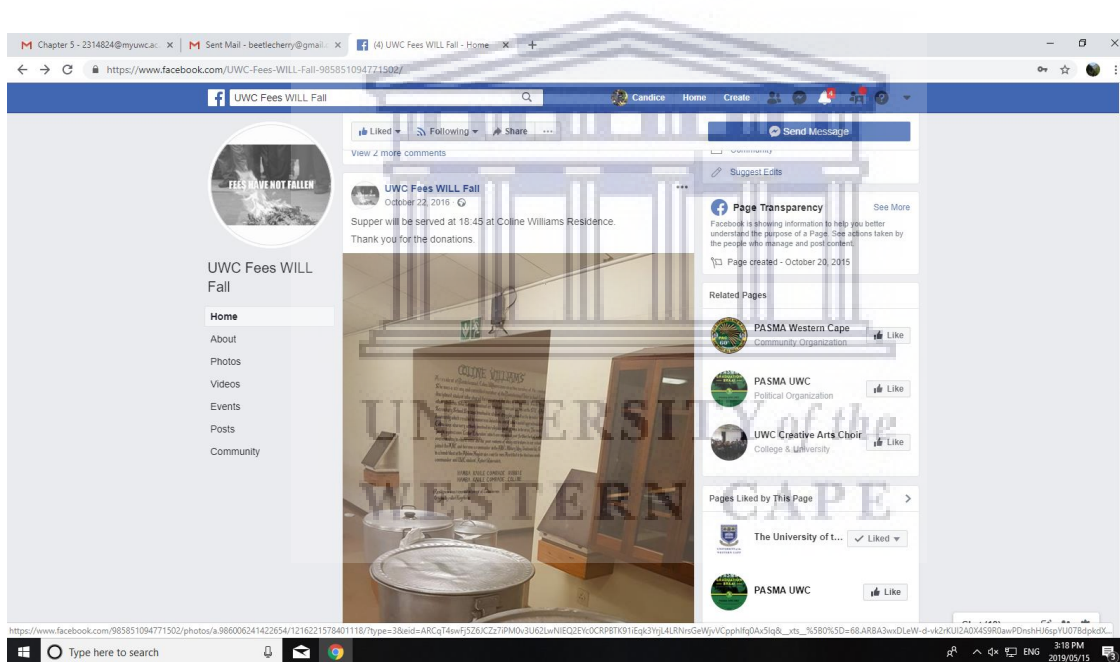


Figure 6. 10 A screenshot of a post on 22 October 2016

Figure 6.10 is a post informing the residence students about supper, giving them the time and place and thanking donors for their donations that provided the supper. During the shutdown, all services were suspended and as a result the Res students became responsible for feeding themselves. The students relied on donations for food. This call for supper post can also be viewed as a motivation for students during a difficult time. The post does not only detail the supper information but it also features the story of two prominent freedom fighters in the anti-apartheid protests, Coline Williams and Robbie Waterwitch. The picture features the mural on

the wall in the Coline Williams residence that details the story of the two freedom fighters that died tragically in a bomb explosion on one of their missions. The inclusion of this mural acts a message of encouragement to the followers of UWC FWF during a period of constraint placed on them. The sacrifice of Coline Williams and Robbie Waterwitch has been so imperative in the history of the struggle that a UWC residence was named after Coline Williams. UWC FWF chose this specific residence in which to host their suppers, using her story as motivation to continue their cause, reminding students of their comrades before them and the sacrifices they have made.

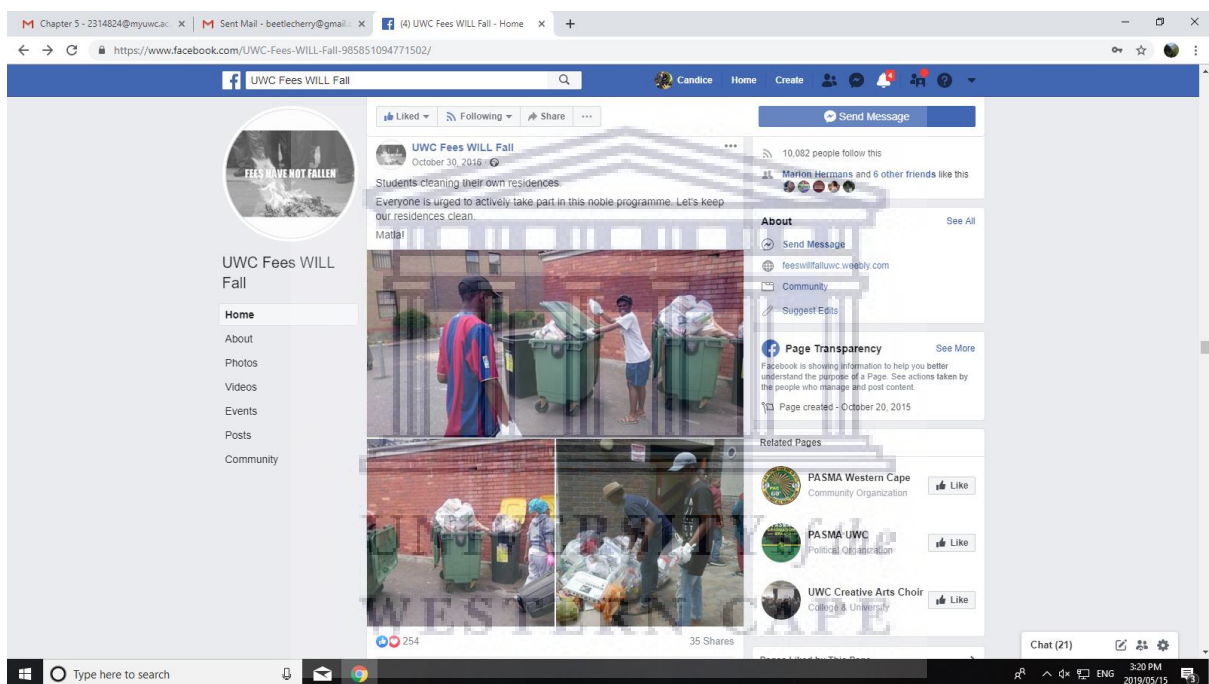


Figure 6. 11 A screenshot of a post on 30 October 2016

Other information posts published during the shutdown were of the student activities on res, the posts mainly highlighted their challenges and how they overcame those challenges, such as the living conditions of the residence during the shutdown. Figure 6.11 is a post about a Res clean up during the 2016 shutdown. The post details the cleanup encouraging other res students to take part in the cleanup “Everyone is urged to take part in this noble programme. Let’s keep our residence clean.” The cleaning programme is referred to as “noble”, this gives the impression that the students have a high regard and respect for their Res and living conditions. This post also includes three photos of students working together collecting rubbish, these pictures show team work, unity, respect and responsibility for themselves and their living

quarters. They show themselves working together for the same purpose, overcoming the difficulties of the shutdown. This post also contradicts the image of the students portrayed by the mass media, of them being destructive, burning the residence buildings and university property during protests. The image UWC FWF creates with this type of information posts sends a different message to the public. They show that they are the victims of the shutdown and that they care about their residence by cleaning it up when there are no cleaners and that by doing it themselves they are responsible and unified.

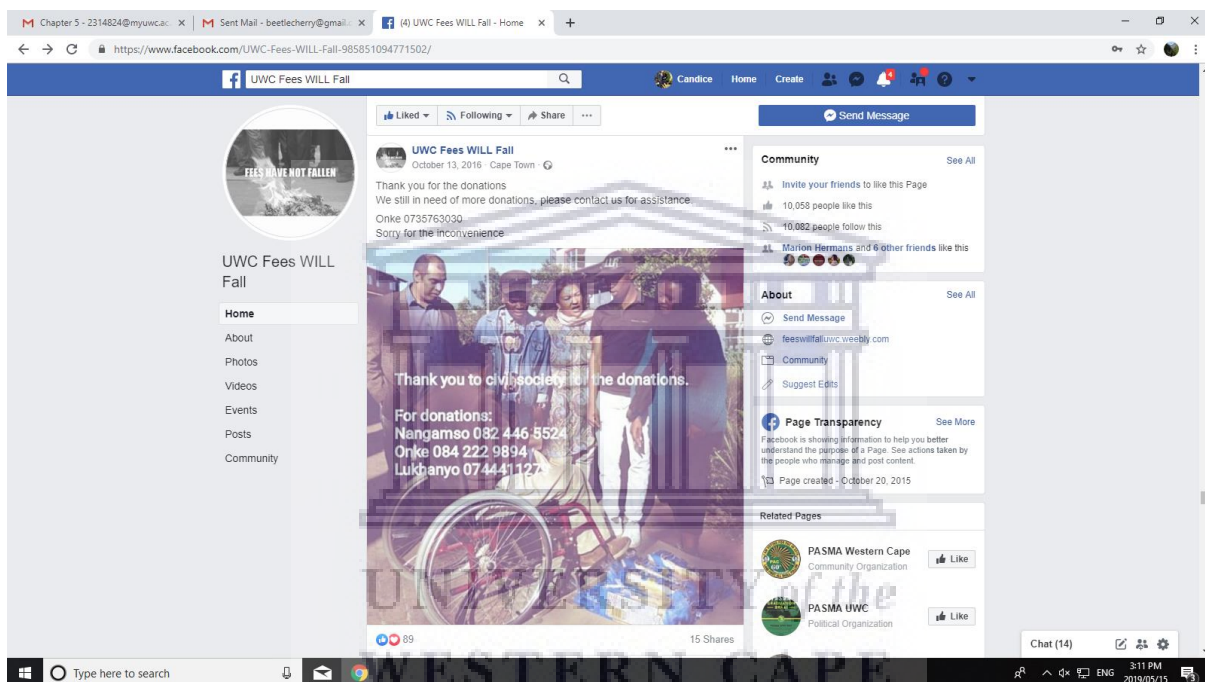


Figure 6. 12 A screenshot of a post on 13 October 2016

Other posts, such as Figure 6.12, are directed at the public. This post is an appreciation for donations. UWC FWF were always asking for donations in the form of food or money. In Figure 6.12, a note of thanks is given to donors and more donations is requested. UWC FWF uses an image of a disabled student to represent the Res students, creating a picture that draws on the heart strings of the viewer. A person with a disability represents a more vulnerable group of people than an abled body person. A person with a disability is seen as more helpless and more at risk of becoming a victim during a time of turmoil. This post was published during the same time period when there was protest clashes with police, police raids taking place the Res and a heavy security presence on campus with access restrictions. The donors are pictured standing closely to the student in the wheelchair with facial expression that look as though they

are worried and concerned for the student. The student's back is facing the viewer with his head in a downward position, he is featured alone in the picture adding to his vulnerability. UWC FWF is using this image of the disabled student to represent them, extending the vulnerability of this student to all the students affected by the consequences of the shutdown of the university.



Figure 6.13 A screenshot of a post on 21 October 2016

In other information posts UWC FWF requested assistance from their followers and the public, their requests ranged from asking for money, power banks, food and medical assistance. Figure 6.13 is an information post requesting donations for money, which was used to pay the bail of the arrested students. UWC FWF documented all the arrests of their members and repeatedly asked for donations for bail money, in the same manner as this post. The #UWC35 refers to the number of UWC students that were arrested during protests and the money raised would go towards the payment of their bail. The number that accompanied the hashtag would change when students were released on bail. The release of students on bail and the amount of money raised were also documented in posts on the UWC FWF Facebook page. The bank account details was not a business or group account but it was always the same account details given in the posts asking for monetary donations. In this post, the background picture draws on the identity of peaceful protesters that have been featured throughout the Profile pictures, Cover



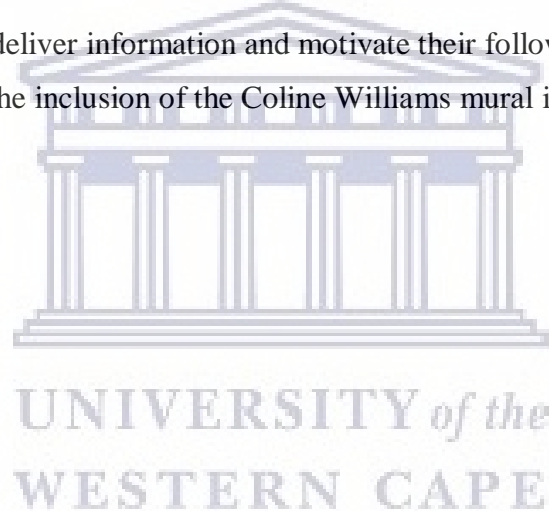
photos and participation posts. UWC FWF uses the image of a peaceful group of people marching together to represent them, this images contradicts the images of UWC FWF protesters used by the mass media where they are portrayed as destructive and violent. The colour red is again featured in a post. The colour red is used in the heading of the message, making the message stand out bur also adding a sense of urgency and importance to the message.

#### **6.4 Summary**

In the construction of their virtual community, UWC FWF continued the construction of their online identity from their Username, Profile pictures and Cover photos to their posts on their News Feed. They reused images from their Profile pictures and Cover photos to created participation and information posts. They used images that showed shared interests of their followers, such as the images of community gathering and narratives that drew on the history of the university and the country. By doing so, UWC FWF created a continuity of their identity as shown in Chapter five. The identity of UWC FWF starts as anonymous and part of the larger FMF movement but in the evolution of the protest at UWC the identity of the movement becomes specific to UWC addressing issues and problems that are relevant to UWC students and stem from unresolved problems from past protests at the university. The identity created by UWC FWF for their organization is continued and reinforced with the use of images that carry the same message of their established identity that is specific to UWC and the repetition of messages through the reuse of Profile pictures and Cover photos. This also allowed for UWC FWF to negotiate their own identity and not be reliant on the mass media to create their identity. They were able to construct an identity that in some cases contradicted their imposed identity from the mass media, such as the identities that show them as peaceful and harmless protesters or as victims during protests and their association with the narratives of past protest in which they assimilate their cause and actions with those of the past. This research shows that a virtual space affords an organization with a platform to create their own identity that is not dependent on the mass media, they are not reliant on the mass media to publish their side of the story but can now do so themselves through a SNS. Which is supported by Murthy, Rodriguez & Kinstler (2013) who state that a virtual community provides an underrepresented group with a space in which they can establish and articulate their group identity in a more independent manner that would have been possible in the physical space.

The analysis of their use of Facebook also revealed that the shutdown of the university did not affect their online protest as shown by the literature. The literature states that the use of SNS increases at the start and again at the end of a protest but the activity of UWC FWF Facebook page show contradicting results to the literature. The analysis of the online activity also gives insight into the strategy of an organization when restrictions are placed on their physical activity. Their use of Facebook shows how they navigated the restraints of their activity in the physical space by substituting it with the virtual space.

The information posts also show how SNS have revolutionized the communication of an organization. During the shutdown of the university, UWC FWF published information posts in which they were able to communicate directly with students at Res but at the same time show followers that did not live at Res what was happening inside of the restricted area. They were able to conduct internal and external communication at once. They also cleverly constructed their posts to deliver information and motivate their followers at the same time, as seen in Figure 6.10, with the inclusion of the Coline Williams mural in a call for supper post.



## Chapter Seven

### The Creation of Counter Narratives through Remediation and Resemiotization

#### 7.0. Introduction

The analysis in Chapter Five showed that the construction of the UWC FWF identity online started as anonymous and evolved into an identity that was specific to UWC/ directly related to UWC. The construction of the UWC FWF identity became independent from the national FMF movement and interrelated to UWC. In the Chapter Six, the construction of the identity that was specific to UWC continued in their communication with their followers and the public. Their posts showed that through the use of images that drew on narratives from UWC past and the protest history of the university and the country, UWC FWF was able to continue their identity that was linked specifically to UWC.

Chapter Seven aims to further examine the UWC FWF link to UWC through the examination of the counter narratives of the UWC identity. In the construction of the UWC FWF identity online, they drew on narratives from the physical landscape such as the UWC 'Ending and Beginning' sculpture, with the use of the sculpture as an artefact in their Profile picture and posts on their News Feed. The aim of this chapter is to explore the remediation of the 'Ending and the Beginning' sculpture (and other semiotic materials) in the construction of counter narratives of the identity of the university by UWC FWF (Prior & Hengst, 2010; Banda & Jimaima, 2015).

UWC FWF created a series of posts and a Profile picture that was about the End Outsourcing protest and featured the 'Ending and Beginning' sculpture. The UWC FWF protest and the End Outsourcing Protest seemed to be running parallel to one another. From the outside it looked like UWC FWF took on the End Outsourcing protest to elevate their own agenda. The two protests seem to be independent from each other, as the End Outsourcing protest is led by the outsourced workers and the UWC FWF protest is student-led. The two groups have different demographics and different roles on campus, but UWC FWF extensively featured the End Outsourcing protest on their Facebook page. The author has brought two sources (the sculpture and the End Outsourcing protest) together and created a complex message thereby creating meaning that is layered but one layer needs the other in order for this particular message to be formed and understood.

The data for this analysis consists of two posts and Profile picture number seven. A multimodal analysis is conducted to examine the remediation of the ‘Ending and Beginning’ sculpture (Bolter & Grusin, 2000; Prior & Hengst, 2010; Banda & Jimaima, 2015), protests and the resemiotization of the post (Iedema, 2003) in the repetition of the message in a series of posts.

On 9 February 2016, a post was published on the UWC FWF News Feed that comprised of a caption and six photos about the End Outsourcing protest.

## 7.1. Post 1

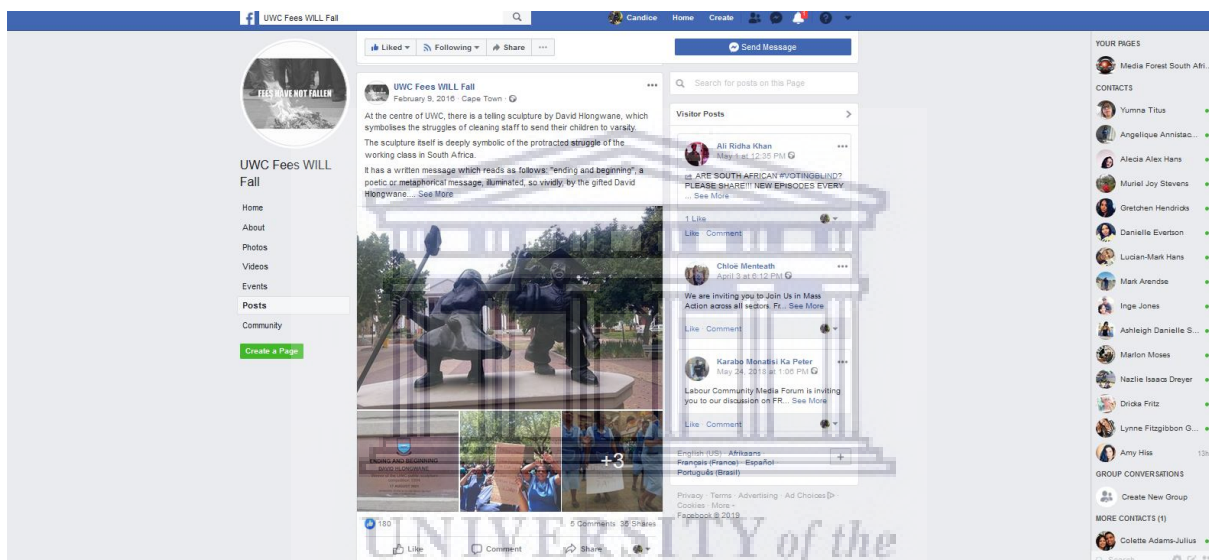


Figure 7.1 Post 1

The message in the post was centred around the ‘Ending and Beginning’ sculpture. This post was not named but is referred to as post 1. This was the first post in what unknowingly became a series of three posts that used the sculpture to construct their message. A multimodal analysis will be conducted on the photos of the post and the chronological use of the photos to create a message. The post was made up of a caption and six photographs.

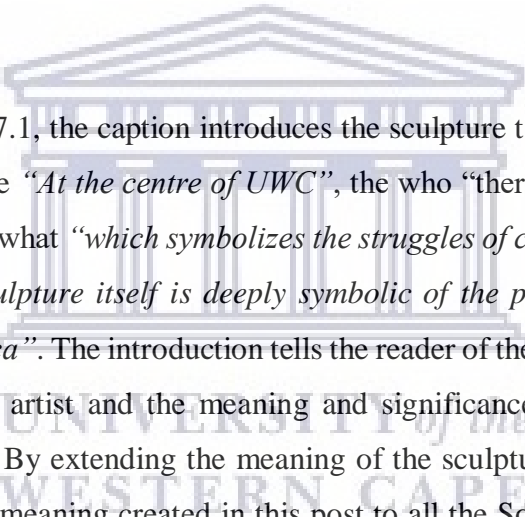
The caption:

*At the centre of UWC, there is a telling sculpture by David Hlongwane, which symbolizes the struggles of cleaning staff to send their children to varsity. The sculpture itself is deeply symbolic of the protracted struggle of the working class in South Africa.*

*It has a written message which reads as follows: “ending and beginning”, a poetic or metaphorical message, illuminated, so vividly, by the gifted David Hlongwane.*

*The message “ending and beginning” illuminates a key moment of struggle, the ending of a painful past, and beginning of a bright future; the ending of an era of “kitchen girls” and “garden boys”, invoking a struggle song: “my mother was a kitchen girl, my father was a garden boy; that’s why I’m an educator”. This struggle song probably inspired David Hlongwane in the process of carving out his award winning sculpture.*

*The end of outsourcing will be the beginning of raised incomes for the most marginalised workers at UWC. This achievement can only be good for the reputation of UWC, given the history of UWC as “the university of the left”. Do it for Prof Jakes Gerwel. End outsourcing.*



In post 1, as seen in figure 7.1, the caption introduces the sculpture to the reader by providing information about the where “*At the centre of UWC*”, the who “*there is a telling sculpture by David Hlongwane*” and the what “*which symbolizes the struggles of cleaning staff to send their children to varsity. The sculpture itself is deeply symbolic of the protracted struggle of the working class in South Africa*”. The introduction tells the reader of the post where the sculpture is placed, the name of the artist and the meaning and significance of the sculpture to the university and the country. By extending the meaning of the sculpture to all South Africans, the author is extending the meaning created in this post to all the South Africans who read it and not just the UWC students who read this post. The caption continues with the introduction of the name of the sculpture “*ending and beginning*” which also encapsulates the meaning of the sculpture. The meaning is explained as “*the ending of a painful past, and beginning of a bright future; the ending of an era of “kitchen girls” and “garden boys”*” with emphasis placed struggle reference of the sculpture. The sculpture is then related to a struggle song that could serve as the inspiration for its creation “*invoking a struggle song: “my mother was a kitchen girl, my father was a garden boy; that’s why I’m an educator”. This struggle song probably inspired David Hlongwane in the process of carving out his award winning sculpture*”.

The connection to the End Outsourcing protest is made through connecting the name of the sculpture to the explanation of the purpose and necessity of the End Outsourcing protest, “*The end of outsourcing will be the beginning of raised incomes for the most marginalised workers*

at UWC”. The caption then connects the End Outsourcing protest to the university and the struggle history of the university by indicating that the success of this protest will be beneficial to the university and it will be a continuation of the success of past protests, “*This achievement can only be good for the reputation of UWC, given the history of UWC as “the university of the left”*” The caption reinforces the value of this protest by drawing on a key figure in the transformation of the history of the university, “*Do it for Prof Jakes Gerwel. End outsourcing*”.

The pictures in the post are a visual representation of the caption, the images recreate the message of the caption. In the layout on the News Feed, not all the pictures are visible for the viewer to see. The salience of the post allows for the picture of the sculpture to prominently feature as the first and larger photo. Three pictures are placed below and are all the same size. The second picture is a picture of the plaque of the sculpture, the third picture is a photo of the End Outsourcing protest. The fourth picture in the layout of the post is not visible but features the “+3” which is the Facebook indication for the remaining number of pictures that are included in the post but not visible in the News Feed layout. This creates a hyperlink to the full post (Kelly-Holmes, 2015). It also prompts the viewer to click on the post in order to see all the information of the post.



Figure 7.1. A - F The individual photos from Figure 7.1

The first two photos in this post are pictures of the ‘Ending and Beginning’ sculpture as it stands at the entrance of UWC, Figure 7.1.A and 7.1.B. The first photo, Figure 7.1.A, is a close up of the sculpture, clarifying the female and male figures in the sculpture. The second photo, Figure 7.1.B, is a close up of the plaque detailing the information of the sculpture. These two pictures together capture the sculpture as it stands in the landscape. The pictures showing the original state of the sculpture and relays the meaning of the sculpture that it represents in the physical space. The first two pictures in this post of the sculpture are also the visual representation of the caption, the description and explanation. The picture shows the “*cleaning girl*” who represents the “Ending”, a metaphoric description of the ending of past oppression (Banda & Jimaima, 2015), a struggle that ended after a call for change by student-led protests at the university. The “Beginning” represented by the graduate figure in the sculpture, symbolizing change and a better future with prospect. The name of the sculpture is also of importance, as shown by the close up of the sculpture plaque. The name “Ending” sends a strong and clear message that the struggles of the past has ended, it is finished and will not be repeated. The word “Beginning” in the name signals a new start, a new chapter that is different from the past. The Beginning has been resemiotized as a new start that represents the end of the old or the end of the struggle (Iedema, 2003). The plaque also tells the reader the significance and importance of the sculpture by including its accolade “Winner of the UWC public sculpture competition 1994”, showing the acknowledgement of the meaning of this sculpture.

The image of hope and prospect, in this post, is contrasted by the End Outsourcing protest pictures that follow. The connection between the sculpture and End Outsourcing protest is made in the caption, “The end of outsourcing will be the beginning of raised incomes for the most marginalised workers at UWC”, showing that like with the sculpture, there is an ending and a beginning in the End Outsourcing protest. The “Ending” for the outsourced worker is their current position, employed as a low income worker earning minimum wage with no benefits. The beginning for the outsourced workers will be when the demands in their protest are met, such as the wage increase or the free education for their children that they are demanding. The fulfilment of the End Outsourcing demands equals a better future for the outsourced worker similar to the better future symbolized by the sculpture.

The connection between the sculpture and the End Outsourcing protest is further made by the four End Outsourcing protest photos in the post, Figure 7.1.C to 7.1.F. The End Outsourcing protest that occurred in the physical landscape is repurposed along with the narratives from

past protest that the sculpture and the reference to slavery represents. These narratives are part of the history of the university and the sculpture is a symbolic representation of that history. This post creates the message that the End Outsourcing protest is not a new protest but it is a renewal of past protest, this message is created through the recreation of past protest images and the remediation of the female figure of the sculpture to represent the current outsourced workers in the End Outsourcing protest (Prior & Hengst, 2010; Banda & Jimaima, 2015).

The female figure of the sculpture is remediated to represent the outsourced workers in the present time. In the photos, the female outsourced workers are shown protesting in their cleaner's uniform, recreating the representation of the "Ending" in the present time (Prior & Hengst, 2010; Banda & Jimaima, 2015). The female figure of the sculpture and its meaning is extended to the End Outsourcing protest, showing that the current outsourced workers are the female figure of the sculpture, therefore reviving all the narratives that she represents. The female figure represents the people that fought during the struggle in the history of the university. The remediation of this figure in the End Outsourcing protest creates the message that the struggle has not ended in the past as represented by the sculpture but that the struggle of the past that was fought by the low income workers is still continuing in the present. The message continues to show that the End Outsourcing protest is the same protest as the past protests at the university and the outsourced workers are the same as the workers that took part in past protests.

The photos of the End Outsourcing protest in this post also recreate images from past university protests with a focus on the female as a participant, as previously shown (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). The protest moments vary in landscape, some pictures depict the protest in the university plain and in the cafeteria, creating a layering of different protest moments. Each moment of the protest is used to create an individual meaning that forms part of the greater meaning constructed by this post. Figure 7.1.C shows the outsourced workers conducting a peaceful protest on the university plain, practicing common protest practices such as singing struggle songs, dancing and displaying placards that publicize their demands. The focus of the picture captures the despair and desperation of the workers, the woman in the front is shown with her arms in the air, making a gesture that could indicate helplessness. Another woman in this picture is shown wiping her eyes like she wiping away her tears, another is shown holding a large placard with demands written on them, she holds the placard in front of her face to show that her demands are more important than her identity. The picture is also taken at an angle that shows a large number of participants in this protest as a large group of people wearing the



outsourced workers uniform can be seen in the background (Kress & van Leeuwen, Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design, 2006). Figure 7.1.D is from the End Outsourcing protests that took place in the student centre. The workers are again pictured conducting a peaceful protest, dancing and singing and displaying their demands on placards. There is a small group of workers in the front and the background shows a larger group of outsourced workers at the protest. The addition of a protest picture in the cafeteria shows that the protest was not isolated to one space on the university but that the protest action affected the main areas of the campus. The movement and spread of the protest is represented by the different areas in the picture. This draws on past protest narratives in which the whole university was affected by past protests. Figure 7.1.E is a photo of the End Outsourcing protest that occurred in the university plein showing a different moment from that protest. This picture shows more of the participant's faces and the size of the crowd that participated in the protest. The photos shows the desperation and helplessness of the workers depicted by their movements, of their hands in the air, waving their placards high to make them visible and the sombre looks on their faces that show their feelings. In the photo the crowd can be seen singing protest songs. The last photo, figure, Figure 7.1.F in this post is a black and white picture of the End Outsourcing protest. An effect is added to the photo to make the photo look as though it is from a past protest, assimilating the current protest with the past protest. The photo is however from the present protest as the same participants and placards as those seen in the previous three protest pictures can be seen in Figure 7.1.F. The End Outsourcing protest is again featured in this picture with the participants singing and dancing and holding up their placards during a protest moment in the university plein. More placards are visible in this photo, allowing the viewer to see more of the outsourced workers' demands.

The notion of semiotic remediation is used to explain the how various semiotics in this picture, are remediated to create new meaning (Prior & Hengst, 2010). Remediation explains the repurposing of existing semiotic activities for present purpose, it is the concurrent reconstruction and deconstruction of artifactual, individual and societal meanings (Prior & Hengst, 2010). Therefore, in exploring the creation of protest narratives on SNS, the understanding of past protest in present protest narratives are important. A black and white picture is an indication that the picture is old and it is an image from the past. In this post the black and white effected has been added to the photo to reference past protests. The photo can be identified as a photo from the same 2016 End Outsourcing protest as featured in the other photos in this post. The reader can identify the faces, the uniforms and the landscape as the

same as those featured in the colour pictures. This black and white picture makes reference to the “golden” era of the university, an era that was marked by protests and significant political change for the university and the country. It is a reference to the university’s past turmoil, a difficult period in the history of the university. This black and white picture is not a random picture from the End Outsourcing protest, this picture features multiple protest references, such as the singing and dancing actions which are synonymous with South African protest actions, the desperate and painful expressions on the faces of the workers, the worried and helpless gestures by the ladies in the forefront of the picture, the use of placards to display their demands, the reference to slavery in the text on the placard and the dress code of the participants that indicate their marginalized disadvantaged place in society. It is not only the black and white effect that is remediated to create this protest picture but the layering of multiple semiotics. By doing this the author is not trying to confuse the reader by having them think this picture is from another protest but this black and white protest picture is used to evoke emotions and memories that are linked to past protests at the university. The use of the protest semiotics such as the black and white effect evokes feelings that are attached to a time when students at UWC were oppressed and had difficulty receiving an education, a time that required students to fight for a free and fair opportunity to be educated.

The 1973 protests included the shutdown of the university and many violent encounters with the police. This picture prompts the reader to remember past protests and connect it to present protests, including their emotions and opinions of past protests to read, understand and form an opinion on the current protest they are reading about in this post. The reader will then use their schemata of the history of the university to read and understand the message created by this post. They will start off reading this post with the meaning of the sculpture, the symbol of new beginnings, hope, freedom and a brighter future for all at UWC. A contrast created by the protest pictures. Outsourcing workers are protesting for a higher wage and for free education for their children at UWC. An education that was promised to them in the past and set in stone publicly by the “Ending and Beginning” sculpture. The black and white protest picture revitalizes the past protest, linking the present protest to the past, giving the reader the idea that past protests and problems have not ended and are still being fought in the present. New meaning is then added to the current protests with the inclusion of the past protests, referencing it with the use of this “past” protest picture.

### 7.1.1. The Demands on the Placards

In each of the four End Outsourcing protest photos in this post, the placards of the participants are visible. These placards detail their demands and express their reasons for protest, giving the viewer more information to the reason and purpose of the protest. The placards illustrate the revoicing of the narration of the protest demands (Prior & Hengst, 2010). In the protest in the physical space, the protesters sing and chant their demands during a protest event, the placards revoice these songs and chants through the written demands in direct speech on the placards. The demands are reperformed through their display in a written form on the placard (Bolter & Grusin, 2000), without losing their purpose or meaning in the revoicing. The viewer is still able to experience the protest and hear the demands in the manner that the pictures capture the protest. These picture not only show the demands in the written mode on the placards but the actions of the protesters show the addition of the voicing of the demands. These pictures are an example of immediacy and hypermediacy (Bolter & Grusin, 2000), this post shows pictures that capture the End Outsourcing protest in action, enabling the viewer to see live moments from the protest. The protest in action is represented through the actions of the protesters in the pictures, their movement in the pictures suggest dancing and singing with the placards filling in the words to their struggle songs. The addition of multiple pictures add numerous moments that are captured from the same protest and gives the viewer the opportunity to experience the protest as though it were happening live.

The examination of the protest demands aims to further show the connection between the End Outsourcing protest and UWC FWF.

In Figure 7.1.C the demands written on the placard read:

- Free Education, Free Registration for Our Children, Free Accommodation for Children  
PLEZZZZ
- We demand a decent and better living wage of R10 000. End Outsourcing. Free Education for All

The demands on the placards show that the End Outsourcing protest is about more than money or a wage increase. The demands show a request that extends to the family of the outsourced workers and show requests that would provide opportunities to the family that the outsourced

worker is unable to provide. The demand in this photo is a request for free tertiary education as the request includes free registration and free accommodation. This request shows that education is a priority for the outsourced worker but that they are unable to provide and pay for the education of their children. The word please is used alongside the request for free education, however it is written as “PLEZZZZ”. The word is not written like this as a spelling error because the other words are spelt correctly but it is written like this as a form of begging, all the letters are written in capital letters and the [Z] is repeated four times to mimic the extended [Z] sound placing emphasis on this sound. This “PLEZZZZ” highlights the desperation and need of this demand from the workers (O’ Halloran, 2011).

In the second demand, the request for a wage increase, “We demand a decent and better living wage of R10 000.” the use of the words “decent and better” the workers are referring to their current wage as unfair and unjust. They are emphasising that their wage does not allow them to pay their basic expenses. In their demand, the phrase “End Outsourcing” is added, signalling their desire to be directly employed by the university and gain benefits that include free education at the university for their children. They also added the phrase “Free education for All” extending their demand for free education to everyone and not only their children. This placard is repeated in Figure 7.1.E, placing emphasis on the importance of the problem that their wage does not allow them to pay their basic expenses.

The other demands featured in Figure 7.1.D are:

- Outsourcing must fall
- Who owns Bidvest

The “Outsourcing must fall” phrase is the resemiotization of the “Fees Must Fall” slogan from the FMF protest that has been adapted to be used in the End Outsourcing protest (Iedema, 2003). They are also repeating their demand of becoming employed directly by the university so that they can gain the same benefits as the university staff which include free education for their children. The outsourced workers also show the public that they do not know who their employers are with the phrase “Who owns Bidvest”, highlighting the impersonal nature of their employment. This placard shows that the workers do not know the people or persons that own the company that employ them. The comment shows that their employment is clinical and ridged and there is no relationship with their employers.

In the last picture of this post, Figure 7.1.F, a new placard is included that reads:

- Outsourcing is Modern Day SLAVERY!

This demand combined with the black and white protest picture. This slogan makes a direct reference to slavery and a reference to apartheid (with the addition of the sculpture in this post). The outsourced workers are referring to themselves as slaves. They are relating their working conditions and the issues they are facing to that of slavery. This statement combined with the previous comment “Who owns Bidvest”, Figure 7.1.D, showing the distant and impersonal relationship the outsourced workers have with their employers, similar to that of a slave because a slave is bought and owned for labour (Miers , 2003). The protest slogan “Outsourcing is modern day slavery” is rebranding outsourcing as modern day slavery.

The inclusion of free education or access to free education through direct employment by the university, as a demand in the End Outsourcing protest is the connection between the End Outsourcing protest and UWC FWF. The connection is then further extended to the university and the history of the university. The workers inability to pay for their basic needs includes not being able to pay for the education of their children. This issue is raised in the demands on the placards e.g. “Free Education, Free Registration for Our Children, Free Accommodation for Children PLEZZZZ”. The demands show the need and desire the outsourced workers have to educate their children but they are unable to pay for the education because they are earning minimum wage and the costs of tertiary education is high. The outsourced workers position themselves as parents who cannot afford to pay for tertiary education, resulting in their children not being educated and therefor repeating the cycle of the child becoming the unskilled worker. This creates the connection to UWC FWF, the demand for free education is adopted by the students who are also the “children” of the outsourced workers, hence the Fees WILL Fall. The demand for free education to end the cycle of the outsourced worker also shows the remediation of the female figure of the ‘Ending and Beginning’ sculpture, a sculpture that represents the history of the university. The meaning embedded in this demand shows that the struggle of the “kitchen girls and garden boys” still exists in their inability to educate their children therefore continuing the cycle of low income workers. This shows that the university has not transformed, as represented by the graduate in the sculpture but that the struggle continues in the present, continuing the meaning represented by the cleaner.

## 7.2. Post 2

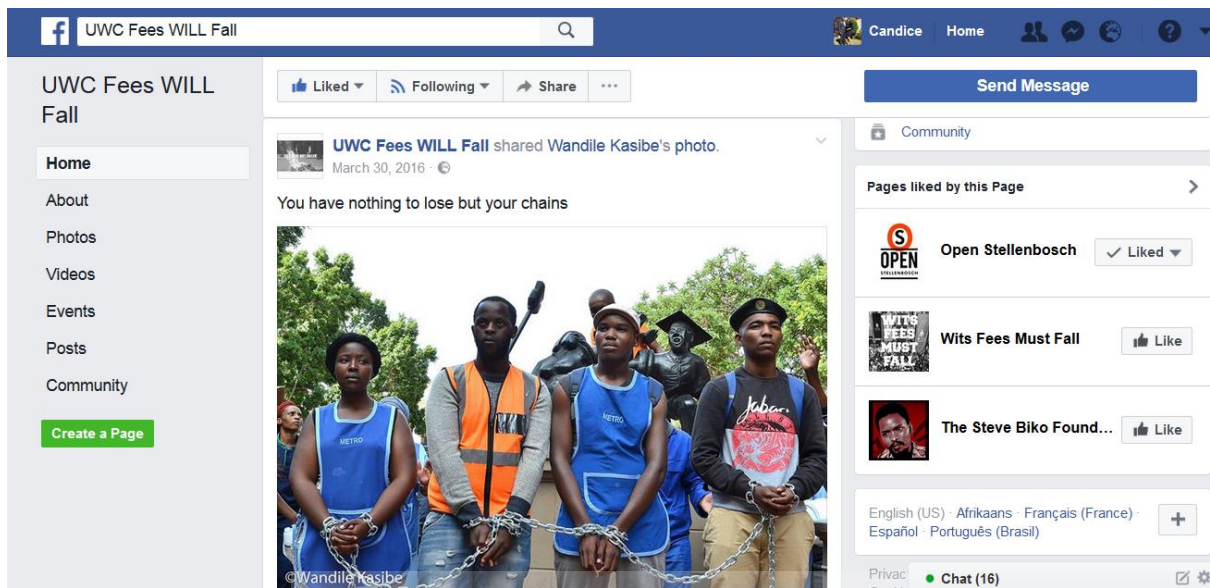


Figure 7. 2 Post 2 on 30 March 2016

A second post was published on 30 March 2016 about the End Outsourcing protests at UWC. In this post, UWC FWF created another a counter narrative of the UWC identity with the use of the ‘Ending and Beginning’ sculpture.

Post 2 (henceforth) consisted of a short caption and one picture. The caption reads as follows: “You have nothing to lose but your chains”. The caption speaks directly to the reader of the post “you”, the reader, being the followers of UWC FWF page. The reader is immediately drawn into the post to become one of the chained participants in this picture. The caption implies that the collective, you and UWC FWF are not free but enslaved. In order for someone to have “nothing to lose”, they must already have nothing and this caption implies that the people they are referring to have nothing except the chains that enslave them, showing that their actions will only improve their lives given their current enslaved status.

The caption is accompanied by a photo of the embodiment of the ‘Ending and Beginning’ sculpture. The female figure of the sculpture, that represents the “UWC cleaners” and the “working class” (caption from Post 1, Figure 7.1), has been recreated by the four bodies standing in front of the sculpture (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). The researcher assumes that the people who are recreating the sculpture are not outsourced workers themselves but are students, whom have dressed as outsourced workers to effectively remediate the sculpture to show that in the future the current students become the cleaner and not the graduate as the sculpture

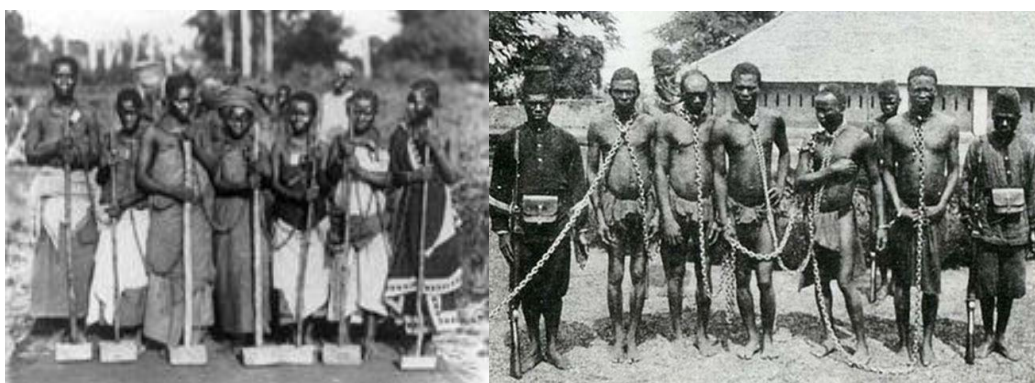
implies (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). This sculpture is remediated because of the absence of the graduate in the embodied sculpture. If the embodied sculpture was the resemiotization of the sculpture, there would be no outsourced worker in the embodied sculpture to represent the 'Ending' and the students would represent the graduate, the 'Beginning'.

This picture however shows the remediation of the sculpture, the current students are recreating the female figure of the sculpture to represent their future selves. In the new sculpture, the four students are each wearing a different uniform to represent a different outsourced worker at UWC. The students are dressed in the uniforms of the UWC outsourced workers. They are not wearing the full uniforms of the outsourced workers but only one item from each of their chosen uniforms. From left to right: the first student is dressed in a cleaner's uniform, wearing the blue Metro apron. The second student is dressed in a gardener's uniform, the orange apron. The third student is dressed in a cleaner's uniform, also wearing a blue Metro apron. The fourth student is dressed as a security or political activist, the student is wearing a black beret. The four students are standing in a line next to each other. They are chained to together with one long thick chain and they are surrounded by the UWC outsourced workers in the background.

The embodied sculpture is placed in front of the existing sculpture in the landscape, the geosemiotics of the embodied sculpture adds to the meaning making of the sculpture (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). The two sculpture together clearly illustrates the remediation of the sculpture. The "old" sculpture is contrasted with the embodied sculpture with its placement in the same landscape. A contradiction in the time and space (Agha, 2007) of the sculpture as the narratives of the past is brought into the present with the embodied sculpture through the recreation of the space in which the sculpture stands. The time and space in which the sculpture stands takes on new meaning with the remediation of the embodied sculpture that renews the meaning of the cleaner (Prior & Hengst, 2010; Banda & Jimaima, 2015) in the message that challenges the identity of the university. If this event had taken place at a different location on campus, like a lecture hall or a sports field for example, the contrast in meaning would have been lost. Four bodies chained together dressed in the outsourced workers uniform standing in a lecture hall can be interpreted differently. The students who view this can assume that the bodies are part of the lecture or part of a presentation taking place in that venue. The placement of the bodies in this particular space, highlights the contrast created as both images are visible in the same space and at the same time (Agha, 2007). It is important to note that relationship between sign and place, in this photo, is a key component of the meaning that is created in this post.

The embodiment of the sculpture and only the female figure shows that the students who were supposed to become graduates have not progressed but instead have become cleaners (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). The remediation of the female figure of the sculpture draws the past narratives associated with that figure of the sculpture into the present, such as the past protests that called for the removal of race restrictions to access tertiary education (Lalu, 2012), this meant that only a certain race was allowed access to tertiary education limiting the options for work of those that were excluded by this law. The End Outsourcing and UWC FWF both called for free education (as previously shown) showing the repetition of past restriction to tertiary education but in the form of fees, if students were unable to pay university fees they would not be able to attend university or complete their studies and become graduates. Their only remaining option would be to become unskilled workers, repeating the cycle of the past. The remediation of the sculpture changes the original meaning by reawakening and re-associating the past narratives with the present protests. The current students have shown that demands from past protests have not materialized but the problems of the past is being repeated but in the present it is in the form of the high and unaffordable costs of university fees, creating the exclusion of the poor and underprivileged that cannot afford it.

The students are chained together with a long chain that is wrapped around the hands of each of the students, making a reference to slavery. They are in a position where they are unable to move and use their hands. They are also unable to separate from each other. The image of the students chained together is a similar image to that of slaves chained together as seen in Figure 7.3.



*Figure 7. 3 The chaining of slaves.*



The students are depicting the image of the outsourced workers and their future selves as slaves. The chain can be a symbolic representation of the outsourced workers oppression. They are chained and unable to move from the situation they are in, enslaved to their positions. The chains can also be viewed as the remediation of the demands on the placard of the End Outsourcing (Prior & Hengst, 2010). The absence of placards can be substituted by the chain. The outsourced worker are demanding an increase in their salary and they are asking for free education for their children. Their current income is R2700.00 per month with no benefits. This amount must pay for all their expenses that include rent, transport, food, electricity etc. After paying expenses they will be unable to pay for the education of their children and because university is not free, the child of an outsourced worker will not be able to attend university. This repeats the cycle of the unskilled workers child becoming the unskilled worker. The parent and the child have no option but to stay bounded to their situation, unable to break the chains of slavery.

### **7.3. The Connection to the History of UWC.**

The last analysis chapter aimed to illustrate the connection between UWC FWF and UWC and the reasons for the creation of a contradicting UWC FWF identity that challenged the identity of the university. The data consisted of posts that featured the End Outsourcing protests, a different protest to UWC FWF. The posts also related the same message to the seventh Profile picture used in the construction of the UWC FWF identity. Individually, the posts use the sculpture to create the message in the post. UWC FWF strategically use the sculpture to show the deep rooted connection between the grievances of UWC FWF and the university that is tied together by the outsourced workers and the problems they are experiencing.



*Figure 7. 4 The seventh UWC FWF Facebook page Profile picture*

The posts and the seventh Profile picture show the remediation of the sculpture to represent the present outsourced workers (Prior & Hengst, 2010), contradicting the transformation identity of the university. The first post introduces the reader to the sculpture as it stands in the landscape, created to represent the past struggles that have ended and the representation of the present and future opportunities that the university provides. This image of transformation is contrasted by the addition of the End Outsourcing protest. The protest conducted by the cleaners shows the enlivening of the past struggle protest that is symbolized by the “Ending” of the “Ending and Beginning” Sculpture, bringing the past protest into the present. The remediation of the female figure in the sculpture is done through the representation of the female outsourced workers in the protest pictures of the post (Prior & Hengst, 2010). The workers become the “kitchen girls and garden boys” whose struggle is represented by the sculpture. The female workers are shown protesting in their uniform, they are shown with facial expression that depict despair, unhappiness and concern. The demands on the placards are reminiscent of the past protest demands that were about free and fair education, the access to education for everyone (Lalu, 2012). The pictures of the protesting cleaners added to the pictures of the sculpture show the enactment of the past struggle protest.

In the End Outsourcing protest the cleaners represent themselves as parents and their protest demands are for their children, the children who become the students at the university but cannot because the issues of the past such as free and fair access to education has not been resolved. This shows the repetition of the cycle of the cleaner in the sculpture. If the parents are earning minimal wage and do not have benefits with their employment they are unable to

educate their children. Their children cannot attend university because their parents cannot pay university fees because they earn minimum wage. The children, who cannot attend university become unskilled workers such as cleaners, gardeners and security guards, repeating the cycle of the outsourced worker and the female figure of the sculpture and showing the connection between UWC FWF, the students and the outsourced workers, the parents. This cycle shows that the transformation at the university as shown in their identity (Banda & Mafofo, 2015) has not materialized in the present.

The remediation of the female figure of the sculpture is repeated in the second post through the embodiment of the sculpture (Prior & Hengst, 2010). The students use their bodies to recreate the female figure of the sculpture and extend the representation to all the outsourced workers. The students use the uniforms of the outsourced workers to remediate them from the past to the present (Prior & Hengst, 2010). The use of the uniform show that the students are representing the current outsourced workers but they are also representing their future selves in their aim to show the repetition of the cycle of the outsourced worker. The other semiotics used in the remediation of the sculpture are the facial expressions, the position in the landscape of the new sculpture and the use of the chains. The facial expression of the new sculpture show the dissent of the cleaners, their unhappiness signals the lack of prospect in their future. The placement of the new sculpture is important in creating the remediation of the regional sculpture. The contradiction of the original sculpture is created through the placement of the new sculpture in front of the original sculpture (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), drawing on past narratives that the female figure represents and joining them with the narratives of the present creating the layering of the message.

In the embodied sculpture the demands of the protesters have been remediated from the traditional placards to the use of chains binding the protesters together (Prior & Hengst, 2010). The chains are used as a literal representation of the constraints that the students and outsourced workers are experiencing.

The message in the first post is repeated in the second post and ultimately becomes the part of the identity of UWC FWF as seen in the seventh Profile picture. In the creation of these messages the author uses semiotic chains in the repetition of the message from one post to another. The cleaners' uniform for example is used in the posts and the Profile picture to link the past cleaner to the present. In post one the uniform is used to show that the female figure of the sculpture represents the cleaners who are identified by their uniform, in post two the

uniform is used as the identification marker from the original sculpture to the embodied sculpture and in the Profile picture the uniform is placed on the female figure of the sculpture bringing the narrative of the sculpture into the present.

The concept of slavery in the messages are represented with chains. In the first post the employment of the cleaners are referred to as slavery on the placard, “Outsourcing is Modern Day SLAVERY!”, in the second post the chains are used to represent slavery by chaining the outsourced workers together and in the Profile picture the chain is wrapped around the sculpture chaining the past and present together not allowing them to separate.

The landscape in which the sculpture stands also plays a role in the creation of the message. In the first post the End Outsourcing is shown in the university plain which is the same place as where the sculpture is placed in the landscape of the university. In the second post the embodied sculpture is placed in front of the original sculpture and the Profile transforms the sculpture as it stands in the landscape creating a new sculpture in the landscape.

The demands of in all three messages relate to one another, they are resemiotized in each message without losing the core meaning of the message (Iedema, 2003). The UWC FWF primary demand is free education, this demand is resemiotized (Iedema, 2003) in the End Outsourcing protests as “Free Education, Free Registration for Our Children”, “End Outsourcing. Free Education for All” and “Outsourcing must fall”. The outsourced worker directly ask for free education for their children but they also ask for the end of outsourcing which would mean that they are directly employed by the university gaining the benefit of free education for their children. In the Profile picture the banner that is placed around the sculpture is representative of the placards in a protest. The call for free education is added on the banner in the form of “end outsourcing” repeating the need for direct employment of the cleaners so they may gain the benefit of free education for their children.

#### **7.4 Summary**

UWC FWF have recreated their message through remediation (Prior & Hengst, 2010), creating the multi-layering of past and present narratives in the contradiction and challenge of the identity of the university. Their message was resemiotized (Iedema, 2003) to become the picture that was set as one of their long-standing Profile pictures, using this counter narrative

as their identity for this period. The counter narratives of these messages show a deep-rooted connection that is specific to UWC and the history of the university.



## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

#### 8.0 Introduction

The following chapter is a conclusion to this study. This study was set against the context of the UWC FWF in the Virtual Landscape that existed as a parallel but active participant in the events of the physical protests at UWC. The UWC FWF protests seemingly stemmed from the ripple effect of student-led protests that occurred at the other universities in South Africa and specifically Cape Town. During this period, neighbouring universities in the province, UCT and SU, were in turmoil as a result of student-led protest. As the last university to experience protests, the UWC FWF protests quickly escalated to the shutdown of UWC. The online presence of UWC FWF created a new angle to their protests that was a consistent factor in the construction of their identity and their public communication. The use of a virtual platform by the UWC FWF in the construction of their protests was examined in this study. The use of a SNS in a protest motivated this study of the UWC FWF Facebook page. This study aimed to investigate how the UWC FWF protest emerged, represented and continued online. The study further aimed to examine how a protest phenomenon on the virtual platform, Facebook, continued and in some cases contradicted the official identity of the university. In order to establish whether the main aim of this study has been achieved, this chapter briefly discusses the objectives of this study. Thereafter, the researcher will provide a final conclusion, discuss the limitations of this study and also provide suggestions for further research.

#### 8.1 To examine the development of the UWC Fees WILL Fall protest (identity) online.

The data has revealed that UWC FWF did not have a fixed identity online but that their identity evolved online with the evolution of the protest in the physical space. The UWC FWF organization created an identity online with a name that was specific to UWC but the images used to represent that identity on their Profile picture and Cover photos did not immediately match that identity. Their online identity in the Profile pictures progressed from anonymous to an identity that challenged the identity of UWC. The identity created by the Cover photos, a feature that gives the viewer's more information about the organization, revealed that the organization drew on past narratives of the university in their creation of self. In similar fashion to past protest UWC FWF showed their organization as a peaceful, emerging and a well-

supported organization with the use of pictures that showed large crowds, packed mass gatherings and peaceful marches on university.

The use of an online platform in the creation of the organizations online presence shows that UWC FWF was able to move away from the traditional dependency on the mass media for the construction and publication of their identity and create their own independent identity via the online platform. They created an identity that drew on past narratives of the history of the university and the country and created an identity that contradicted the identity of UWC.

### **8.2 To employ a virtual linguistic ethnography approach when analyzing varying semiotic materials used in the trajectory of this protest on Facebook.**

UWC FWF used semiotic materials from the landscape in the construction of their protest online. They remediated various artefacts such as the cleaners' apron, chains and the 'Ending and Beginning' sculpture that drew on past narratives to construct counter narratives. UWC FWF used images from the landscape to create familiar and similar images in the construction of their messages online. Their use of narratives from the physical space to the virtual space created a different trajectory of time such as the re-enlivening of past protests in the present time and trajecting it to the future by placing it online for future followers of the platform to see.



### **8.3 To determine the agency and voice of protesters as part of counter-transformative discourses.**

The analysis shows the re-use of the Facebook features to show the agency and voice of the protesters as counter-transformative discourses. UWC FWF remediated the introduction features of their Facebook in order to construct an identity that contradicted the identity of the university. They used images that drew on past narratives related to the struggle history of the university and struggles of the country such as apartheid and slavery. They also used images that countered the images of their organization that were published by the mass media, by using images that showed them as peaceful and united.

UWC FWF continued their counter-transformative identity in the construction of their online community. They created a community in the virtual space that drew on narratives from the

physical space in a way that people would recognize the connection between the virtual and the physical. They did so by using images from the physical space to represent their community in the virtual space, creating the idea that the virtual community is the same as the physical community. UWC FWF used images of peaceful protests at UWC, they used images of marches around the campus and mass gatherings in the student center with students showing their support and agreement. The counter narratives in their community identity was also created with the re-use or use of similar images from the images in the construction of their identity.

#### **8.4 To analyze multimodal representations of protests by the UWC FWF.**

UWC FWF created counter narratives of the transformation identity of the university through the remediation of a symbol of the university's transformation in the landscape. The analysis shows that the student-led protests and the outsourced workers protest are all connected to the university. UWC FWF constructed images that show the deep-rooted link of UWC FWF and the End Outsourced protests through challenging the meaning of the 'Ending and Beginning' sculpture and showing the absence of transformation.

#### **8.5 Contributions of this study in CMC.**

- 8.5.1 This study contributes to the literature on the role of CMC in protest. The study contributes to the literature on identity on the virtual space. This illustrates how identity is constructed online. The study also shows how the constructed is continued and used in the construction of an imagined community in the virtual space.
- 8.5.2 This study contributes a new understanding to the relationship between the protest and the mass media. The construction of the organizations identity online shows that the organization is no longer dependent on the mass media to create their identity in the public space. UWC FWF have used the features of Facebook to create their own identity that contradicts the identity created of them by the mass media.
- 8.5.3 This study contributes to the understanding of the role of the virtual space in the practice of protest. Valenzuela *et al.* (2014) state that the role of the online platform is that it is engaged at the start and at the end of the protest. UWC FWF have shown a different engagement from the literature through their use of the online platform during the



period of restriction in the physical space. UWC FWF increased their online activity during the shutdown periods of the university.

8.5.4 This study opens the question to the policy of the official organization in relation to protests. The study on the UWC FWF protest showed that the restrictions placed on the protesters by the official entity, UWC, did not affect their online activity. In fact, the data shows that activity increased on the UWC FWF Facebook page during the shutdown of the university in 2015 and 2016.

### **8.6 Below are a few suggestions for future studies in this exciting new virtual space:**

- Impact of digital activism in the political arena
- The abilities and affordances of participation in an online protest
- Reflecting on thesis writing when conducting multimodal virtual research
- Evolving research ethics in the online space
- Agency, voice and transformation in the virtual linguistic landscape

### **8.7 Summary**

To conclude, the findings of this study illustrate that in the area of online protest, research is still growing and requires an immersion in the virtual space. Not only does our understanding of “ethnography” and “data” change, but so do our understanding of how best to present this multimodal work within the monograph manuscript state.

I contend that the UWC FWF Facebook page highlights the advantages which the online space allows and also provides a new space for self-expression and a re-representation of agents of change.

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