



**University of Fort Hare**  
*Together in Excellence*

**SELECTED BENEFITS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS EXPERIENCED BY THE  
2015-16 FEESMUSTFALL LEADERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE  
(UFH), EAST LONDON CAMPUS (EL)**

**By**

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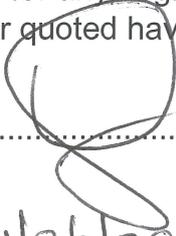
**Faculty of Social Sciences**

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**2018**

**(i) DECLARATION**

I declare that this dissertation is the product of my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or exam in any other university, and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Signed: .....  


Date: ..21/06/2018.....

**(ii)SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT**

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### **(iii)DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to my family which has been a source of my inspiration through their love and support.

#### **(iv) ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving me great courage i to complete my research, even in difficult moments. I would like to acknowledge my supervisor, Mr. Lucky Kunene, for believing in me and guiding me throughout my research study.

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## **Abstract**

There is a high amount of journalistic and academic work that has been produced to highlight the various benefits, challenges and lessons the 2015-2016 #Feesmustfall movement (henceforth, FMFM) brought in its wake for South African universities affected and for South African society in general. Save for the University of the Witwatersrand (activists from Wits produced a book on their involvement in FMF), there is a dearth of academic research on the benefits, challenges and lessons of FMF as experienced by students from affected universities, in general, and student activists and leaders, in particular. The current research study was conducted to fill the above gap, and it adopted a qualitative research philosophy in the manner the research was conducted. For the purposes of this research, 10 male FMF activists from the University of Fort Hare, East London, Eastern Cape, were interviewed using an in-depth interview technique about what they regarded as benefits, challenges and lessons stemming from their involvement as leaders of the FMF protests in their campus. The findings largely set a tone of caution that there are important considerations to be made when looking at the issue of university-based protests such as FMF; in particular, the physical and psychological impacts of these protests on student leaders, or activists. The results in this study demonstrate that those who led the 2015/6 FMF protests at UFH, EL, experienced intellectual and political leadership growth as young student leaders, among some benefits. The benefits, however, were tempered by some of the traumatic and disturbing events, which exposed these leaders to, among other things, police violence, arrests and serious psychological discomfort during and even after the protests. The results also demonstrate some continuing positive impact of the FMFM on those who led the students at UFH, that is, they are today using the knowledge and lessons from FMF to make their workplaces and their political organization's processes more robust and democratic. These findings are significant, especially for universities in South Africa, and in Africa as a whole, as there are researchers who caution that the South African university management is quick to resort to student repression during protests. The study then goes on to discuss the relevance of the findings for universities, the state and the student activists themselves. Areas for future research are also proffered.

**ACRONYMS:**

**ANC:** African National Congress

**BCM:** Black Consciousness Movement

**FMF:** Fees Must Fall

**FMFM:** Fees Must Fall Movement

**UFH EL:** University of Fort Hare East London Campus

**UNICEF:** United Nations Children's Fund

**SRC:** Student Representative Council

**SAUS:** South African Union of Students

**SASCO:** South African Student's Congress

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## Chapter One

### Overview of the Study

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This introduction has two objectives, to introduce the entire research components that went into the design and execution of this research project, one. Two, the introduction will also lay out the rationale of the study, with various bits of chapter one, as indicated above, simply adding to the way the rationale is ultimately concretized in the form of research findings. The introduction's major argument is that the #Feesmustfall protest's current descriptions, meanings, dynamics and related concerns are dominated by structural concerns of political analysts and academics, with very little to complete lack of engagement with voices of those figures who led FMF. The leading figures of the movement, especially the activists from previously black universities such as the University of Fort Hare and Walter Sisulu, to mention but two black universities from the Eastern Cape, are conspicuously absent in the discussion of FMF and its dynamics, especially on the lives of the leaders themselves; hence, the importance of this study.

#### THE BEGINNING OF FMF 2015/6: STUDENT DEMANDS AND RESPONSES

According to the Commission of Inquiry on Higher Education (henceforth, CHE), there is no one account when it comes to explaining how FMF started (CHE, 2016: 09-15). The first seeds of the protests, however, began at the University of Cape Town with the black student in that university demanding the removal of Cecil John Rhodes statue from the university's main campus (CHE, 2016). The University of Cape Town students protesting for the removal of Rhodes statue called themselves #RhodesMustFall movement and used dramatic public antics and social media to internationalize their cause, including smearing the statue with human waste. The scene of the smearing of Rhodes statue with human waste went viral, being shown all over the national and international media, just like how the Arab Spring activists took shots of street protests and clashes using their smart phones and other latest media tools like You-tube. According to Luescher (2016: 53), "the statue became a focal point of black student protest against the legacy of British imperialism, apartheid, the capitalist exploitation of Africans and lack of transformation evident in

institutional commemoration, the institutional culture and 'whiteness' of the university, as well as the demographic make-up of UCT staff and the content of the curriculum." The #RhodesMustFall protests inspired not only dialogue on the unfinished business of transformation, but also inspired a new movement of nationwide protests that began at the University of Witwatersrand. The Wits movement called itself #Wits FeesMustFall movement after the Wits SRC, under the leadership of Shaera Kalla, lost a vote on the increase of fees to the university Council. They, as Wits student body, rejected the reasons given by the Council for increasing fees (CHE, *ibid*: 11). A strong crowd of 5000 students joined the Wits protest. After the #Wits Fees Must Fall (henceforth, WFMF), the country was taken by storm as other universities across the country also joined the call for FeesMustFall (FMF).

## THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The South African government announced the same year (2015) that there would be no tuition fee increase for 2016 and the protest ended. Furthermore, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr. Blade Nzimande, used the FMF calls for decolonization to call for Africanisation of universities (Le Grange, 2016: 01). The government also established the Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education (CHE). However, in 2016, protests re-started again as it was announced by the South African Minister of Higher Education that there would be fee increase capped at 8% for 2017 and each institution was given the freedom to decide by how much their tuition would increase.

New issues got added and were made prominent within the FMFM in 2016, issues such as the end of outsourcing at universities, the decolonization of the curriculum and gender equality or patriarchy (Badat, 2016, Council on Higher Education, 2017: 02). Because of the above, other commentators have argued that, there is a need to see FMFM as a multiple issue based movement, instead of just the fall of fees alone (Dismelo, 2015 cited in Le Grange, *ibid*: 02).

Citing Pontsho Pilane, Lesley Le Grange (*ibid*: 02) uses Pilane's analysis to state why FMF protests continued, and Pilane's analysis is that FMF continued because fees did not fall, but were frozen; outsourcing had also not ended and the academia was still not decolonized. But what can be learned from all the above mentioned aspects is an attempt to come to terms with why the FMF protests continued and

new issues added or others given more prominence is the lack of narratives of the organizers, campaigners and those who were the vehicles of the protests across various parts of the country. This gap has left the field of FMF analysis dominated by top down speculations by educated and well-networked political analysts and academics; hence, the importance of a study like the current one, as only an engagement with activists of FMF may be seen as the most reliable means to understand the various meanings and dynamics that occurred in 2015/16. We are of the view that explorative research, such as this one, can be helpful in illuminating the power or urgency of FMF activists and constraints they operated under, especially activists from previously black universities such as UFH.

This research represents a small effort in exposing the experiences of 10 leaders of the (FMF) protests from a previously black University in South Africa, namely, University of Fort Hare (UFH), East London Campus (EL). In-depth interviews were used to explore what benefits were gained by the FMF leaders at UFH, EL. There is research demonstrating that activists experienced police violence and other challenges: did this happen to UFH activists too, is another important research question of this study. Lastly, the study explores how these leaders have used what they have learnt from (FMF) protests in their lives today after the protests.

## **1.2 Background**

### **The Broader Context of Young People and Protests: The International and African Experience**

This section argues that in Africa, and even more so in South Africa, young people are increasingly drawn into protest movements, and, therefore, it is likely they will lead future protests. Therefore, their perspectives on the reasons why they join protests, their difficulties and the transformations they undergo as a result of their activism will be an important area of research, especially in university contexts as the FMF youth activists have demonstrated. Internationally, researchers argue that young people engage in protests of various types driven by a sense of justice, and this is well articulated by the quote below:

“During adolescence, many young people are driven to explore issues of social justice. They are creating and experimenting with their own principles and political ideas, leading many to become involved in cause based action. Consequently, in many organizations, the young people become the keepers of the vision. They are the one who focus on the mission (Zeldin et al, 2000: 05).”

Youth’s motivations for joining protest movements in the African context also said to be motivated by both the youth’s negative or skeptical perceptions of political administrations and politicians, together with weak economic growth and youth’s economic exclusion (Falola, ed., 2004).

There has been a ballooning interest in the youth internationally, largely due to the increased precariousness of the lives of this group, but also because young people constitute the hope and resource for future economic, social, political and cultural well-being and development for even the most advanced societies (Delgado, 2002). The United Nations World Youth Report (2004) noted that over 200 million youth lived in poverty, 133 million were illiterate and that, as a collective, the youth constitutes 41% of the world’s unemployed, and that about 6000 to 7000 young people become infected with HIV/AIDS every day. The optimism and hope bestowed in youth today has had a significant impact on how many pressing socio-economic, political and cultural challenges are perceived, and, in particular, the increasing importance of young people in unlocking such challenges (Zeldin et al., 2000). A typical example to illustrate the above spirit is the hope attached to the youth as a solution to curbing new HIV/AIDS epidemic within the same group by UNICEF (2002). Thus on the one hand, young people have been viewed with skepticism and suspicion as a threat to society due to their deviance and high propensity for destruction, while, on the other hand, the youth is also considered to be the key to solving a spectrum of social, economic and political challenges for their societies (Delgado, 2002). The current prevailing perspective, however, seems to confirm the latter approach as the most favoured approach by youth development practitioners, analysts and experts; with the majority seeing youth as resources to be harnessed for societal development (Lerner, R., 2004 (Foreword) in Falola).

Despite the rising optimism regarding the youth internationally, young people are influenced and shaped by the social landscapes they inhabit, from their involvement

in processes of local politics, society's structures to family relations, and these ought to be prioritized in order to properly and concretely understand their actions and how they respond to challenges within such landscapes (Wamucii, P. and Dwasi, P., 2011 in Kondlo, K., and Chinenyengozi, E.). The prominent scholar, Mamadou Diouf (2005 in Honwana, A. and De Boeck), also continuing from this optimistic position, notes that African youths are deeply and profoundly engaged and are key actors in Africa's socio-political and economic transformation, yet they are marginalized in Africa's political, social and economic discourses (Diof, 2005 in Honwana and De Boek). Due largely to their marginalization from discourses in the continent, progressive academic think tanks in Africa have been quite vocal on the need to deepen research approaches on African youths' identity, lives, ambitions and the critical role they play in transforming their societies (CODESRIA, 2017). But over and above that, the following key political events in Africa over the past decade have re-asserted and enforced the importance of African youths in Africa's political, economic, social and cultural change processes, from North Africa to South Africa.

### **1.3 The Youth in the Arab Springs and Feesmustfall Movement**

The Arab Springs are social revolutions that took the Maghreb region by storm when scores of young people over a few nights overturned long standing dictatorships. The Arab Springs began in 2011, in Tunisia, and then quickly spread to Egypt; their major cause was high levels of youth unemployment and weak economic development in Tunisia and Egypt, combined with the authoritarianism of the political administrators of the two countries, all combined to marginalise young people. The youth responded with a combination of means and, within a few hours after the beginning of the street protests, sit ins and police and army face offs, the dictatorships fell, thereby creating a space for new societies to emerge in these countries. But there was certainly also a lot of brutality and violence involved in these uprisings, many people died and others got injured; but there are very limited scholarly works recording such suffering in this area of research. What is significant though for scholarship is, despite the widespread broadcasts of the Arab Springs shown throughout the world, there has been little commentary, cry and celebration by those behind the protests, despite the brave and daring activities undertaken by

such participants in circumventing and, ultimately, bringing down authoritarian regimes such as the ones of Hosni Mubarak from Egypt and in Tunisia. The above situation in some sense confirms Diof's argument above regarding the marginalization of youths' contributions to social, economic and political changes in Africa.

The above pointed status quo has become apparent in FMF, as a number of TV stations and news broadcasters in the country tended to focus much attention on the protests of previously white universities situated in metropolitan areas such as Johannesburg, marginalizing the views and experiences of activists and students from far flung South African provinces such as the Eastern Cape. This particular problem is not new in South Africa, as it was noted as far back as the 1976 Soweto student uprisings. The late Professor Archie Mafeje (1978:17) remarked as follows regarding the impact of the June 1976 uprisings:

“Without a murmur from the Soweto militants, certain South African movements abroad became extremely defensive and started claiming responsibility for the uprising. This was particularly unfortunate as it deprived the claimants of the opportunity to explain to themselves what had happened so as to see more clearly their own position outside (self-criticism).”

Because Mafeje had written the article as a move to raise questions on the relevance of the then current strategies of struggle by the liberation movements vis a vis the ones used by the youth at the time, Mafeje makes no reference to the limitations of not having the student militant leaders reflecting on this issue themselves, as a solution to the speculations at the time, something this study uses as its point of departure, that is, to capture from the insiders' perspective what it meant for leaders of the recent FMF protests to have led the now historic higher education student protests post 1994.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

The key research problem that drives this study lies in an insight by Luescher (ibid: 54), who notes that: “The role of leadership on the side of students (supportive staff) as well as the university management seems crucial in both escalating and containing protests.” This insight is important as it puts the outcomes, especially of

violence, in university-based protests, in the hands of both students and management. However, this insight is important for another reason, some researchers have pointed out within the African higher education landscape that there is generally absence of dialogue between student leadership and university administrations (Fongwa, S.N., and Chifon, G.N., 2016, in Luescher, et., al.). Knowing the importance of student leader's role in scaling down violent confrontations is critical, and in the case of FMF, especially at Wits, this could have prevented the police shooting of students (ordinary and activists alike) with rubber bullets and tear gas, as it is so well documented in the book by Wits fallists entitled *Rioting and Writing: Diaries of Wits Fallists*. How serious was police violence and repression for fallists in other parts of the country such as the Eastern Cape, far-far away from Gauteng based media houses?

Furthermore, the FMFM has been noted for its multi-issue based struggle (Le Grange, 2016); however, no one seems to understand how and when this process occurred within the lifespan of the movement, that is, how and who generated the ideas and concerns behind FMF and how were these distributed nationally across university campuses (Badat, *ibid*: 15-16). How did those who received the ideas channel them to others and where and how are those ideas today used, from 2015 all the way to 2016 (Badat, *ibid*: 16)? What this problem statement seeks to demonstrate is a need for literature that captures the experiences of all FMF fallists, including those outside Gauteng, as the FMFM was a national movement, it is, therefore, important to also ascertain in-depth views of activists from provinces such as the Eastern Cape, KZN and Limpopo on how they experienced the FMF, and what and how are they using their experiences from their leadership of FMF, if at all, today.

### **1.5 Key Research Questions**

1. What benefits did the 2015-2016 #FMF leaders from UFH, EL, experience from their involvement in the FMF protests?
2. What challenges did the 2015-2016 #FMF leaders confront during the protests?

3. What did the FMF leaders learn from the protests and how are they using such insights now?

### **1.6 Aims and Objectives of the study**

The aim of this study is to expose the impact of FMF on the lives of the leaders of the FMF protests at UFH, and how they have taken the lessons they learnt from FMF and used them for self-improvement or improvement of their leadership at university or beyond. The above aims of the study will be accomplished through meeting the following objectives, that is:

- 1) To explore benefits that FMF leaders at UFH, EL, experienced from their involvement with the FMF protests.
- 2) To explore challenges FMF protest leaders confronted in the time of FMF.
- 3) To explore how FMF fall leaders have and continue to use knowledge gained from FMF activities, if at all.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The research study is significant because it adds the Eastern Cape based FMFM activists' perspectives to the research and literature on FMF in South Africa. In other words, this research expands the geographic scope of narratives of FMF activists to the Eastern Cape through giving leaders of the 2015/6 FMF an opportunity to tell their stories on how they benefitted, how they were challenged and were inspired to use FMF lessons for the better in their various endeavors at university and beyond.

### **1.8 Research Methodology**

Given the fact the study sought to give a voice to the FMF activists from UFH, EL, an explorative research design was necessary, especially because there is little known about how the Eastern Cape FMFM evolved and how it affected those involved and how they affected the dynamics of the FMF in return. Qualitative research methodology became the scientific method of choice for obtaining appropriate answers to the research questions of this study and for reaching the conclusion and recommendations that are contained within this dissertation. The use of the in-depth interview technique as a data collection tool in the study ensured that the researcher can deeply explore the answers of the participants and question where they come

from, thus allowing rich data to be obtained from the interviews. The participants were purposively sampled from the UFH SRC 2015/16 leaders list.

## **1.9 Synopsis of the Chapters**

### **Chapter: 1 Overall Introduction**

In this chapter, an explicit introduction to the study, the background of the study, the research problem, research questions and objectives for carrying out the study were discussed. The significance of the study was also unpacked to argue why this study should be considered as academic knowledge.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter outlines the scholarly debates regarding the three research questions and objectives of this study with a view to add new insights on the social issues. The study adopts the class struggle perspective to make sense of the way FMF activists acted, and shaped the FMFM in their respective campus.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter presented the methodology and research techniques employed in the study. The study is an exploratory design study, using qualitative research methods. An in-depth interview technique is the technique used to collect data in this study. The chapter also provides information relating to the way participants in the study were sampled, the duration of the interviews and the ethical procedures applied to protect the identity and anonymity of the participants in the study.

### **Chapter 4: Research Findings and Discussion**

This chapter presented the findings of the research. These findings are organized around themes emerging from the data. The themes are: the benefits of activism in FMF for UFH FMF activists, the challenges of activism in FMF for activists at UFH, EL in 2015/19 FMFM and the perspectives of the uses of insights gained from FMF leadership by UFH, EL activists now. The discussion is then undertaken, where the findings in the form of research themes explained above are then synthesized with the existing academic literature on the specific concerns of themes and literature in order to see if any insights are generated by the results of the study, or if the results corroborate the existing works of literature on the specific theme.

## **Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion**

In this study we have shown that those who led 2015/16 FMF at UFH, EL experienced a mixed bag of results from gaining in intellectual growth and political leadership to being brutalized through police confrontations. Further, I showed that the yesterday's leaders of FMF at UFH are applying their insights gained from FMF to make their political organizations at UFH more democratic and their workplace processes sensitive to workers' interests. Based on the findings above, this study makes recommendations for the affected social institutions which the study results affect. A short and concise conclusion is then provided.

### **1.10 Conclusion**

This chapter was designed in such a manner that it communicates that there is still a need to excavate and expose the inside voices of the key activists of FMF, and, in meeting that objective, this chapter proposed an exploratory design research with qualitative methodology to interview the leaders of FMF from UFH, EL, in the Eastern Cape. The primary goal of this chapter and this study is to bring the voices of other far placed leaders of nation-wide FMF protests in order to broaden perspectives on how FMF was organized, lived and continues to be lived by those who were at the forefront of the FMF activities at UFH, EL. The latter was the key issue communicated in the research problem and in the significance of this study, over and above the research questions and objectives of study which constitute the key building blocks for the rationale of this study. The chapter also mentions the way the argument of the entire dissertation is presented through the synopsis of chapters.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature, that is, websites, books, journal articles, newspapers and pamphlets other textual sources in search of answers to the key research questions and the objectives of this study, as communicated in chapter one of this dissertation.

One of the first key research questions in this study is: what are the benefits of experienced by 2015/16 FMF activists from UFH, EL?. Of course, the above question's objective is to ascertain how the political involvement in FMF for UFH, EL activists yielded any positive outcomes for themselves, or ,if any, for their political organizations. But what is the state of research, or literature regarding this question of benefits of political participation in political campaigns such as FMF for young people in South Africa, and beyond?

#### **2.2 Individual Benefits of Higher Education Student Activism: The Rationale and Practices Worldwide**

The Global Young Voices website ([www.globalyoungvoices.com](http://www.globalyoungvoices.com)) says political participation or political activism is a more targeted part of civic engagement and can be implemented through voting, participating in political demonstration and signing petitions for specific issues. Writing on African university student politics in Africa also sees student politics as a platform by university students for university students to articulate and push for student interests into university governance structures and processes (Klemencic, M, Luescher, TM, and Ojiwo, JO, 2016: 22). The latter perspective by Klemencic et al. is in line with the Global Young Voices' perspective of politics as a tool for targeting the attainment of certain social outcomes. We go deeper into the latter point in order to demonstrate how student activism emerges as a choice or option for university students to apply in their lives at universities, in South Africa and beyond.

Global Young Voices extend their concept of politics as targeted civic engagement through discussing three areas of social uses of politics by youth for youth. The

website of the above think-tank argues that political participation by young people makes better citizens out of them as young people who participate politically in their communities are more likely to become engaged citizens and voters. The latter perspective is also advocated for by UNICEF (n.d: 06), which asserts that the internalization of democratic ideals through participation in political and social processes by young people at an early age is invaluable for the future of society as a whole. The South African White Paper (1997) on transformation of higher education entitled, *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*, by the Department of Education also views the purpose of higher education as being “to contribute to socialization of enlightened, responsible and constructively critical citizens. Higher education encourages the development of a reflective capacity and a willingness to review and renew prevailing ideas, policies and practices based on a commitment to the common good.”

Other advantages of youth participation are youth’s political campaigns against dictatorships, where youth leaders can force autocratic leaders to step down from power, thus allowing these youth to become part of formal-decision making processes. Finally, yet importantly, youth political engagement can also help youth leaders to help other young people to access and enjoy social development services and programs, thus, using politics to bring the voices of young people to the decisions about how to improve youth’s lives ([globalyoungvoices.com](http://globalyoungvoices.com)). UNICEF (ibid: 04) sees other benefits of youth participation as follows:

Leads to better decisions and outcomes;

Is an integral part of a democratic society;

Strengthens young people’s understanding of human rights and democracy;

Promotes social integration and cohesion in society;

Encourages more young people to participate, by example.

The structural significance of student political participation is also present in the microscopic surveys and reviews of the work student leaders do at universities. On the latter, the work, for example, by Hilliard, AT (2010) is symptomatic. After pointing

out that student leaders are seen as invaluable assets to the growth of the academic, social and cultural development of campus environment, Hilliard (ibid) goes on to mention a number of points which she identifies as contributions of student leaders to university life and the benefits that student leaders derive from such contributions in turn. Hilliard (2010: 95) identifies about 23 benefits of student leaders from their activism in university life, which invariably include politics, and, in that respect, she points out that student leaders are essential in campus life as they serve the university by: creating a sense of ownership and responsibility; improve campus physically and community relations; help peers to learn to solve problems in a humane manner; serve as an agent of positive change, at both the classroom level and university level; help change power dynamics and create new forums for learning how to speak out on their own in a variety of arenas and on a range of issues; gain improved conflict resolution skills; have ability to gain skills and problem solving at a broad level; plan and implement programs better and take more risk willingly. In Africa, the trend of structural analysis of student politics and their societal effects is entrenched as we demonstrate by way of history of student politics and organizing globally and in the African continent.

## **2. University Student Based Politics in Africa**

Young people's role in university governance, and, by extension, university student politics, is considered a key issue in university governance systems and processes, globally and especially in Africa (Klemencic, M, Luescher, TM, Mugume, T., 2016: 09). The power and recognition university based students enjoy cannot be possible to understand without a global sweep that brings us back to Africa as a background, and Klemencic et al. (ibid: 09) provides a succinct review of the latter:

“Student governments have historically played a visible role in governance of higher education institutions which has become particularly prominent with the Cordoba revolts in Latin America in the 1910s and since the 1960s revolts in Western Europe and North America. In Africa, they have played an important role in challenging colonial and authoritarian governments across the continent.”

The importance of the above approach to analysis of university based student politics is the fact that it demonstrates a very important fact of youth urgency, frequently ignored by much literature and research on youth studies, that is, the

immense contribution that young people make to their communities and families (Zeldin, et. al. 2000), rather than young people as an un-agentic group dependent on adults for direction and guidance.

It is clear from the foregoing paragraphs that there is a serious attachment and importance given to university based student political activism, in terms of what it is able to produce at a societal level. And while this is important, this type of thinking ignores the individual experiences, pain, sacrifices and even the benefits and lessons that individual activists gain from their involvement in political actions, such as demonstrations, campaigns and other forms of resistance carried out by either university based students from institutions, dating back from the liberation era until today. South Africa's liberation struggle activists trained mainly from UFH in the early 20s and 40s became important in protests and resistance against apartheid, and today much of what they sacrificed has become known better from their autobiographies. Imminent figures such as Nelson Mandela have become better known through autobiographies, in which their moments of triumphs and difficulties are closely captured from their own memory and tongue, and the history of the liberation struggle is brought to life using such individual's personal experiences as activists in the glorious struggle. Mandela (1994: 136) remembers how he felt after he led the first ANC national strike in the 1950s, and his words are worth quoting:

“It was the first time I had taken part in a national campaign, and I felt the exhilaration that springs from the success of a well-planned battle against the enemy and the sense of comradeship that is born of fighting formidable odds.”

What types of benefits accrue to those who lead university based student protests? Are there any tangible positive results that can be identified in cases of student university protests such as the South African nation-wide 2015/16 FMF protests for activists?

### **3. The Best Side of University Student Activism: The 2015/16 FMF Benefits to Leading Fallists**

The 2015/16 from Wits have written and released a book outlining and documenting their interpretations, experiences and perspectives regarding FMF at Wits and

nationally. The Wits fallist book is entitled *Rioting and Writing: Diaries of the Fallists* edited by Crispin Chinguno, Morwa, Kgoroba, Sello, Mashibini, Bafana Masilela, Biokhutso, Maubane, Nhlanhla, Moyo, Andile, Mthombeni and Hlengiwe (henceforth, Chinguno et. al., (eds), 2017) and in this book, I extract a few benefits that the FMF protests brought to the activists at the forefront of the protests. These can be summed up in terms of inculcating deep reflections on the meaning of self and higher education and society, the importance of gender and other activists' identities became household faces on TV, YouTube and other social media and established new networks and relationships and, lastly, many, if not all, the activists developed an acute sense of social justice and action for its realization.

### ***Fostered Deep reflection on self, university and society***

Many of the Wits fallists in the book above constantly shared how their involvement in FMF resulted in them taking a serious reflection on themselves, first, as individuals, their university and the South African society as a whole. These reflections are in line with the democratic dividend thesis associated with higher education training, as explained in the paragraphs above, regarding youth political participation and some of its outcomes. The editorial expresses their racial positioning and its relationship to the book as follows: "The purpose of this volume is to provide a platform for the voices, perspectives, practices of black students within what is perceived as a white space (Chinguno, et al., 2017 :17)."

### ***Pushed Forward Gender as Key Theme in FMF***

Gender was by far the most dominant issue to have been raised in the FMFM in 2015/16 protests, as, for many activists, it represented one of the layers of oppression which South African society perpetuates and maintains (Dlakavu, *ibid*: in Chinguno et al.). It was, therefore, widely contested in terms of activists, and, according to Dlakavu (*ibid*: 112), ANC affiliated FMFactivists from Wits felt the feminist movement within FMF there was divisive, and eventually engaged in efforts to destroy #Mbokodo Leads, the name of the feminist group in Wits FMFM. This issue of gender brings forward issues of division within classes of the oppressed, and it highlights the important role of sociological understanding of diversity of a movement, despite the ideological unity and appearances, which, in many cases, structural analysis, such as the ones drawn on in this literature in the above

paragraphs, ignores. Young politicians and activists can speak in one position and yet mean and represent different lived experiences and interests, and this is critical to take into account in studying youth politics, especially at higher education institutions, where young people are more sensitive to social issues and problems.

### ***Wits FMF Activists Gained Media Attention and Popularity***

Many of the faces of the South African FMFM today are predominantly from Wits, University of Pretoria (UP) and other white universities like University of Cape Town (UCT). The latter is by no accident, but a result of the origins of the 2015/16 MFM protests having started in the said universities, but also with the proximity of these institutions to the national broadcasters, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and other media houses, like NCA. Dlakavu (ibid:111) takes pride in her chapter as she reflects on how #Mbokodo Leads members began trending nationwide on Twitter and on television, which meant people started identifying black women leaders in FMF and, as such, FMF will, according Dlakavu (ibid) be known as having been led by black women.

### ***FMF Activists Established New Networks and Relationships***

Many of the FMF activists from Wits say that during FMF protests and its related activities, they were able to meet and make new friends and comrades, relationships they would otherwise not have gotten into, if it was not for the FMF protests. The importance of this point cannot be taken for granted, especially as it is clear from the accounts of the students in the book cited here by Wits fallists, students were not always well prepared for many of the actions they undertook during the protests (Moloi, N, 2017: 62, In: Chinguno, et. al, ibid), thus, linking up with others and establishing a connection possibly enhanced the vitality and ideas within the movement and possibly helped students to motivate one another; this is important to explore in future research on the FMF protests.

### ***All Activists in FMF Gained a Sense of Acute Appreciation of Social Justice and the Need to Pursue It through Action***

The narratives of the Wits fallists in their book demonstrate a very powerful picture of activists who grew stronger and stronger every-day in their course for social justice, and this, they demonstrated, through the new strategies and methods they used to

engage the university, the ruling party, the support staff on campus (or the workers) and the South African media and general public. There are replete with images of commitment to be peaceful and understood from the fallists' view from the way they engage all the above stakeholders. The fallists were not prepared to stop their protests, for they felt their concerns, that is, racist institutional culture, fees, colonial curriculum and outsourcing were negative practices that denied them a chance for being active South African citizens before and after their studies. With the demand for insourcing, the fallists recognized that an injustice to university staff is also an injustice to them too as the support staff is made up of parents, who share a township and disadvantaged background with many of the fallists, including race. Indeed, they did not stop until the South African president declared no fee increments for 2016, and, subsequently, established a Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education (CHE) tasked with investigating the possibility of fee free higher education in South Africa.

Gender also became one of the issues that were social justice issues pushed through by some of the female fallists who felt that, if it is not incorporated within the demands of the FMFM at Wits, this will constitute a miscarriage of justice for a movement committed to human freedom. The latter activists felt gender inequality was stifling relationships within the protestors themselves, but should the FMFM succeed, it will fail to transform entrenched patriarchy in society (Dlakavu, *ibid*: 109-112). All in all, the FMFM was about, as pointed out by the Fallists regarding FMFM:

“It represents a rejection of white supremacy, the hetero-patriarchal order and other forms of prejudices of the colonial project and promotes the quest to redress the socio-economic and political ravages of colonial history (Chinguno, *et al.*: 24).”

The various benefits outlined above are arbitrary and in no particular order, and, indeed, finding a pattern in documenting them is impossible. However, they are enough to demonstrate that, at an individual level or interpersonal level at least, many activists gained certain benefits from their involvement with FMF. But we showed, as one of the benefits, the proximity of white universities like Wits to the SABC as having been crucial to the national visibility of its fallists and their demands. It is, therefore, important to expand the same approach to reflect how FMF university

activists from poor provinces, such as UFH, in the Eastern Cape, which experienced the same benefits, not based on, location or context differences in this area. But it is also crucial to examine other scholarly unexposed issues in FMF, such as the national climate of hostility to FMF, the severe police brutality on activists and emotional impacts of the protests on activists. How much the movement is covered or exposed to the local and international media directs the sympathies, support and acceptance of the movement, and today, social media has become an important vehicle in which youth movements such as FMF garnered support from the public (Luescher, *ibid*.) The latter was also witnessed in 2011, with the Arab Springs in the Maghreb region.

#### **4. The Challenges of Leading the FMF Protests: The Spectre of Violence**

Police violence against FMF activists gained prominence as the most decisive feature of South African universities and societies' propensity to suppress and stifle transformation, which threaten the foundations of the white, racist and patriarchal power structure as well as the corrupt and wasteful ANC government (Masilela, *ibid*: in Chiguno et al.). It is violence that ultimately killed the FMF movement, over and above student's lack of coherent co-ordination (Moloi, S., in Chiguno et. al, *ibid*: 62). There are, however, other emotional stresses that FMF activists suffer during and after the protests, there are rumours that some FMF activists from UCT suffered severe depression to a point where about three are believed to have committed suicide.

There are numerous violent events that characterized the 2015/6 and were recorded and televised broadly. According to the Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education Report (henceforth, CHE, *ibid*: 11-16), the first incident of violence occurred on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015, when students, together with workers from the University of Cape Town, marched to Parliament in Cape Town. In this march, students managed to enter Parliament's grounds and police responded with stun grenades and tear gas. The police violence against students led to injury of students, with 23 protestors arrested. The violence on students in Cape Town angered students who then called for Dr. Blade Nzimande, as Minister of Higher Education, to resign and also set an

example or other institutions across South Africa and, as a result, further protests across the country also began protesting.

The second violent incident in FMF took place in Gauteng following the Cape Town protests. In this incident, students came across Gauteng province and were joined by school learners. They marched to the ANC's headquarters, the Luthuli house. The students expected to be addressed by the President. According to the Commission of Inquiry report cited above (ICHER, IBID: 14), this did not happen, and the report notes that students became angry and then tried to forcefully enter the barricades around the Union Buildings. The police once again opened fire using teargas and rubber bullets and from then on a battle between students and police ensued (CIHER, 2017:14)

Campuses across South Africa also began protests on, or demanding fees to fall, for example, the University of Witwatersrand (henceforth, Wits) began a momentous movement on the topic of free education, they called this, Wits #FeesMustFall and in a matter of a few weeks, they brought Braamfontein, a portion of Johannesburg's central business district, where Wits is located, to a halt, burning tyres and blocking roads. Wits students engaged in intense debates, confrontations, negotiations, seminars, forums, conferences, the throwing of stones and squabbles with management and police, all in the name of free higher education.

Demonstrations also erupted at the University of Free State, and in Cape Peninsula University of Technology students went on protests, which led to campus shutting down. At the University of Fort Hare, students from its Alice main campus also began to protest and were joined by the students in its coastline campus in East London, who blockaded roads and burnt tyres in the nearby Quigney neighborhood. The Nelson Mandela University (NMU) students also went on protests against fees, blocking entrance to the main road to its Summerstrand campus. All the above protests were unprecedented in scope and unity of purpose behind which masses of students were demanding, not just free higher education for themselves, but free, decolonized, quality education for future generations, a call that threatens the ruling class (Naidoo, L., 2017).

Due the wide scope of the disruptions and violence, this has been the major concern for many researchers, analysts and other diverse stakeholders on FMF. However, no

empathy and wide coverage has been given to the perspectives of students who led the protests, especially regarding what sort of high moments and opportunities they encountered and the attendant challenges they faced; instead, the FMF stories have been told largely through media stories by journalists and political analysts, elites, and not activists. As a result of the elites domination of FMF debates and broadcast, what is largely recorded on this historic movement is not just the violence of students (with almost no attempt to investigate police brutality) and the cost of infrastructural damage that occurred during the protests, damage estimated to be at 500 million (CHE, *ibid*: 16).

There is silence on the total psychological and emotional costs of violence perpetuated against students, especially the use of private security companies and police to fire rubber bullets and rubber onto students in order to disperse and remove students out of various campuses (Duncan, 2016) in many elite's self-serving analyses. To be sure, the above phenomenon is common in societies across the globe as youth movement's contributions easily get subsumed and loaded under the discourses and self-commemorating feats of the ruling political parties and other dominating elite's worldviews. Furthermore, researchers and scholars on youth protests and violence generally hasten to highlight the impact of youth's violent protests for society and for institutions, than to document how such events personally affect the emotional and psychological well-being of the youth activists of such protests. For example, in the struggle against the highly repressive apartheid state, thousands of political and non-politicized black suffered a great deal of pain and persecution meted out by the apartheid security agents, particularly the police (Fullard, M., 2004). Apartheid's ferocious brutality and violence devastated thousands of lives through detentions, torture, bannings, banishments, enforced exile, imprisonment, and, ultimately, death in detention cells (Fullard, *ibid*: 390).

Violence against political activists is also well recorded and known as far afield as the United States of America (USA). Doug McAdam (1986), using the quantitative approach to determine why some people join high-risk political activities generally, found and noted that those people who were recruited to mobilize black voters in a campaign named Freedom Summer, suffered a great deal of abuse and others got killed. He revealed the above in his book entitled, *Recruitment to High-Risk Activism*:

The Case of Freedom Summer, where he exposes how many of the leaders of the Freedom Summer campaign were arrested, beaten, intimidated, harassed and even murdered. Assassinations in the USA, especially of civil rights movements' leaders like Martin Luther Junior and Malcom X, are well known and recorded. Whilst, difficulties and threat to activists and leaders may be instant in certain political movements and activities like in revolutions, there is some evidence demonstrating negative long-term psycho-social effects on youth who lead justice based causes. For example, Peter Levine (2011), using Doug McAdam's book cited above, notes how the student activists who went to fight against segregation in Mississippi in 1964 "paid a severe psychological price for their acts. They had higher divorce rates, lower employment rates and less happiness and satisfaction by the mid-1980s. They were heroes for their contribution to civil rights, but their kind of "civic engagement" was bad for their psychological well-being (not to mention that of them were tortured to death within the first week of the summer)."

Rosa Parks, an America civil rights movement activist who got arrested on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1955 for refusing to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery and, as a result, sparked the American civil rights movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ([history.com/news/rosa-parks-later-years-aftermath](http://history.com/news/rosa-parks-later-years-aftermath)). Whilst activists and leaders and American political elites celebrate Rosa Parks today, yet, she, at the personal level, she paid a dear price for her act of bravery and defiance. It is said that, after the 1955 arrest, her work colleagues, who were black, refused to speak to her for having broken the law and norm and she later lost her job. Rosa's husband also lost his job and for 10 years the couple could barely make ends meet ([history.com/news/rosa-parks-later-years-aftermath](http://history.com/news/rosa-parks-later-years-aftermath)).

Violence against activists in South Africa has also been referred to, but it is important to re-emphasize due to the manner it maimed, imprisoned, exiled and killed thousands of people with untold devastating consequences on the activists who were then young people at the time. In a sad story is related by Ndlovu (2004:428) is that of one ANC activist who abruptly went on exile leaving behind his wife and very young children. When the activists later learned of his wife, he found out that his wife never recovered from the pain of abandonment she felt and later died sad and lonely. His son who was also a student activist also died while his father was in exile.

Raymond Suttner (2003: 183 in Melber, H.) points out that even after going to exile, those who undertook such journeys faced more psychological problems when they got there, as a result of the exile conditions of stress that led to a variety of psychological and social difficulties relating to abrupt dislocation. Further, Suttner (2003: 183) notes that after June 1976 - those young people who fled the country joined the liberation movements suffering from severe psychological traumas and pain inflicted by the apartheid state security agents, but seldom received psychological counselling when they got to exile, except those based in major Western cities.

During FMF, many activists and the entire movement were severely criticized for the violence across university campuses and, in particular, the street violence and burning of infrastructure that went along with the protests, as we have already pointed out. The problem with the academic texts and reports on the destructive nature of FMF protests is, they are devoid of alternatives or uncritical of the climate under which students were operating under or how they were influenced by history, such as the killing of workers in Marikana in 2012.

## **2.5 Limitations of Literature on Activism and Associated Risks**

One of the key limitations of literature on activism and volunteerism is its obsession with low risk activism (McAdam, 1986). Recent research perspectives also concur with the view by McAdam but such a position emanates more from the researchers in the field of civic engagement or volunteerism, for instance, Moore McBride (2006:09) and her colleagues observe that civic research is characterized by success bias and, as a result, the possible negative outcomes remain unexplored. The implications of the above gap are serious for those who join protests, especially in the case of South Africa, a country with the largest number of protests per year worldwide. If and when knowledge on motivations and ambitions of young protestors is unearthed through the perspectives of the protestors and leaders of protests, in particular, then, it is possible to have a more coherent body of knowledge of the not just the negative consequences of these protests on young people, but also how young leaders grow and learn from these protests, many of which have very positive outcomes for society, such as the FMF 2015/6. Recent television documentary on

SABC 3 and a few writers in newspapers have shown how leaders of FMF are now in a worst position, then, they were before the protests began with many still fighting to clear their names in courts, while others are suspended (Sobuswa, 2016).

The above injustice among some issues is the primary reason why there is a need for research and questioning of the welfare and lives of those who were part of the FMFM OF 2015/6. Below, we discuss briefly what happens to leaders of successful youth movements after such movements like FMFM have passed or ceased to exist.

### **5. FMF Activists after the Protests**

The last objective of this research is to explore how FMF leaders from UFH, EL have used the lessons and insights from FMF protest activities to better themselves or their organisations.

However, what makes the above objective crucial to fulfil is the research globally and even locally, which suggests that trauma experienced either at war or in circumstances such political campaigns may continue into the lives of those affected or were part of such political activities, way after such events have passed (Levine, P, n.d.). Lack of attention or follow up on the activities of FMF activists may mean we also academically miss out on the opportunity to appreciate how these once justice driven activists have channelled their activism, insights and ideas elsewhere, away from the eyes of the media and political analysts of FMF, whose interests is societal concern of FMF activists' actions. What did UFH, EL activists learn from FMF and how are they using such insights in their lives today? There is currently very limited insight on this issue on university student activism, thus, it is not known how young activists continue to affect positive changes at a personal level, or in the lives of those they are close to or come across on the day to day basis.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the type research methodology used in this study is outlined and discussed, together with the sample procedures that were followed; the data collection strategy and the data analysis approach taken in drawing out findings of this study are also discussed. Lastly, the ethical considerations that went into conducting this study, in a way that protects the participants that were interviewed as part of this research process were also outlined.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

In Babbie and Mouton (2001), research design is explained as the planning of scientific inquiry, designing a strategy for finding out something. The details will vary according to one's study; however, two major aspects are evident in research design. (1) There must be an explicit explanation of what it is that is being researched and (2) what will be the best method used to achieve results? Merriam (2009) defines qualitative research as an understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is how people make sense of their world and experiences they have in the world. Parkinson & Drislane (2011) view qualitative research as a method used as a participant observation or case studies which result in a narrative, descriptive account of a setting or practice. In this study the qualitative research method assisted the participants as well as the researcher to find out about the problem that exists from the questions asked.

A qualitative method approach to data collection meant that the researcher would be in the position to investigate in-depth benefits, challenges as well as experiences by leaders on FMF for 2015-2016. Participants were from University of Fort Hare and the researcher managed to obtain inputs from the leaders of FMF; perspectives which they all shared regarding the study.

### **3.3 Research Methodology (Qualitative Research)**

This research study utilized a qualitative research design, meaning the major components of study were qualitative in nature from data collection, analysis approach to the interpretation of findings.

Qualitative research is about researching or knowing better actors' perspectives. According to Barbie and Mouton (2012:270), "Qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves" In expanding on Barbie & Mouton above, Neuman (2011:177) explains: "Qualitative studies give meaning; data translate them, or make them understandable. We begin with the point of view of the people we study and then find out how they see the world and define situations. We learn what events, behaviours, and activities mean for them. To begin qualitative interpretation, we first must learn the meaning of things for people we are studying."

Kumar (2014: 177) states that "in-depth interviews are extremely useful in exploring intensively and extensively and digging deeper into a situation, phenomenon, issue or problem. They provide varied and in-depth information and are best suited to identifying diversity and variety." Based on the above assertion by Kumar (2014: 177), in-depth interviews dig deeper and seek the reasons behind the actors' motivations and behaviours in a quest to come to terms with human behaviours and its rationale. This data collection strategy was, therefore, useful in the context of this study, as it extremely exposed how FMF, EL, truly impacted the 2015-2016 leaders and what they have done with the knowledge they gained from their involvement.

### **3.4 Study Context**

The researcher in this study was a research assistant under a University of Fort Hare funded bigger study on the fees must fall. The bigger study FMF study under which this research occurred was funded by UFH's Govan Mbeki Research and Development Centre (GMRDC). The title of the larger study was Key Dimensions of the 2015-2016 FMF Protests: The Perspectives of 2015/16 FMF Leaders from UFH, EL. The current study does not differ remarkably from its mother study; however, it pays greater and detailed emphasis on three issues, that is, the benefits, challenges and lessons learned by FMF leaders from UFH, at the East London campus.

### **3.4.1 Data Collection Instruments and process**

The data collection strategy used to collect data for this study was in-depth interview technique. The interviews took 1 hour to 2 hours and 10 participants who were at the forefront of the UFH Fees Must Fall protests were interviewed.

### **3.4.2 Study Population and Research Site**

As indicated above, the research was conducted focusing only on the experiences of the UFH 2015-2016 Fees Must Fall leaders. The interviews took place at UFH because it is a previously Black University. The University of Fort Hare is a public university in the Eastern Cape. It was a key institution of higher education for black Africans from 1916 to 1959. It offered a Western-style academic education to students from across sub-Saharan Africa, creating black African elite.

Fort Hare alumni were part of many subsequent independence movements and governments of newly independent African countries. In 1959, the University was subsumed by apartheid system, but is now part of South Africa's post-apartheid public higher education system. It is known for its notable alumni, which include several heads of state and Nobel Prize winners. Originally, Fort Hare was a British fort in the wars between British settlers and the Xhosa of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the ruins of the fort are still visible today, as well as graves of the British soldiers who died while on duty there.

Several leading opponents of the apartheid regime attended at Fort Hare, among them Nelson Mandela, Govern Mbeki and Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress, Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party, Robert Sobukwe of the Pan Africanist Congress Congress, Desmond Tutu, and others African country presidents Kenneth Kaunda, Seretse Khama, Yusuf Lule, Julius Nyerere, Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo. During apartheid years, the school was nationalized and segregated along racial and tribal lines; blacks had previously gone to classes with Indians, coloureds and few white students. It became part of Bantu education system and teaching in African languages rather than English was encouraged.

#### **4. Sampling**

Fees must fall leaders were purposively selected through their own experience of having lead 2015-2016 FMF protest in UFH EL. This research study used purposive sampling as a technique. The aim of purposive sampling was to get the actual experiences and lessons learnt during fees must fall action movements. According to Babbie (2010), purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the components to be observed are selected on the basis of how useful they are going to be to the study and the purpose that they are going to serve to the study. As it has been stated earlier on, fees must fall leaders are the ones that are needed to answer the research question.

According to Huysamen (1996), when research is conducted in large-scale surveys, such as opinion polls, in which the intention is to assess the position of the entire population on a particular variable, much larger samples are normally used than experimental research. Although these samples seldom exceed several thousands, samples of this magnitude may still yield quite accurate estimates of the responses of a population of several millions. In this instant, only few participants, which mount to 10, were selected because they need to provide in-depth responses from interviews in order to get the main reason fees must fall took place.

#### **5. Data Analysis**

The method used to analyze data for this study was thematic analysis. The interviews were tape recorded, using a digital tape recorder and the answers of the participants were captured word for word by the researcher in order to preserve the direct and full meaning of the perspectives of the participants in the study. Codes were then developed from the interview schedule questions and then themes began to emerge during data analysis and they are reported in chapter 4 as findings.

#### **6. Ethical considerations**

Creswell (2008) argues that practicing ethics is a complex matter that involves more than just following a set of static guidelines such as those from professional association. Ethically, conducting research requires researchers to actively interpret these principles for their individual projects, tailoring these ethical guidelines to suit the unique contexts of their research. The participants in this study were first

explained to as to what the research is about and their verbal consent was obtained before interviews could start. Over and above obtaining the participants' verbal informed consent, the participants were told, should they feel in any way uncomfortable or unable to continue answering questions as part of this study, they may withdraw or decline to provide such answers.

### **7. Participants' rights**

The participants were allowed to exercise their right to be part of the research study or not. Participants' right to privacy was respected. Participants were informed that they have a right to discontinue with participation any time they feel they want to do so.

### **8 Confidentiality and anonymity**

The permission to conduct the study was applied for and granted by the University of Fort Hare East London Campus. Written consent was also obtained from the participants; see appendix 1. All information obtained in this study was treated confidentially and no personal details of participants were disclosed in the body of this study. It is unethical not to protect anonymity of the information gathered from participants (Kumar, 2012); therefore, the names of the participants are not used in this study.

### **9. Limitations of study**

This study has two key limitations; one is the gender issue whereby all 10 participants in this study were males. Secondly, the 10 male participants could be said to be few to make any meaningful generalization from this study.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Chapter Four

#### 4.1 Introduction

The leading research question in this research study was what benefits did the 2015/16 FMF leaders gain from their involvement in the latter protests? The objective of the above question was to explore from UFH fallists what they saw as things that were beneficial out of the protests.

The answers we received were fascinating, but at the most they were not given off hand, the fallists had to think deep in to come up with answers to this question, a serious contrast to when we asked them about the challenges, the question for whose answers were easily found and explanations outlined at length. The theme that emerged from this question was that of leaders growing intellectually and politically as leaders from debates and activities carried out in unity to strengthen and sustain FMFM in UFH, EL; thus contributing to FMFM nationally.

#### **UFH, EL FMF Activists Grew Intellectually and Politically Growth from FMF Activities and From Working in Unity Others.**

The typical answers here included a reflection on the way they stood firm in their belief in the FMF cause, despite the trying odds to learning new topics like decolonization and political confidence to unite and address large student crowds.

The following are typical responses given on the confidence and growth developed by activists during the protests:

*“It enlightened us that education is a right not an exclusive commodity. I gained confidence; I became confident that I am on the right track in fighting for decolonization and free education. I gained a lot about how standing up against injustice can yield benefits such as attention from the authorities. I felt tremendously excited addressing thousands of masses. It grew my confidence I became more confident in public speaking. What it did for me was as a person a lot to think about like our government when it and why it responds the way it does. I gained a lot of political contacts and content believe people who were intellectuals.”*

*“I learned of in sourcing or issues outside student narrow interests something which was for a student movement to work hand in hand with, the labour movement. Even COSATU started debate of free education. No positive gains but we got arrested instead, we used to call ourselves modern/current political prisoners because we were arrested for new struggles.”*

*“I think I got to grow politically I met inspiring leaders. I got to learn about how to work with different students and leaders in residences to debate and educate one another on free-decolonized afro-centric education.”*

*“It assisted me a lot because I never had grown in leadership experience before fees must fall of 2015. The experience gave me thick skin and it was a good course, I accepted certain things. I developed ability for calmness in every volatile conflict prone situations.”*

From the above quotations, it can be seen that, there was some serious reflection and learning that took place on the UFH, EL activists, and this is significant because there are writers on FMF who posed questions regarding the way the FMFM developed, disseminated and used ideas from one province to the others. The following quotes may be instructive on the hip hoping of some activists and regional or university to university exchanges (UFH worked with WSU FMF activists at some point) during 2015/16 FMF. The UFH, EL activists' answers help in the above through the following responses:

*“We learned and had to equip ourselves with regard to what decolonization means and asked Mcebo Dlamini. It assisted us to know who we are as South Africans and Africans.”*

Mcebo Dlamini is a national figure in terms of the FMFM leadership; he is a key figure FMF activists in the Wits FMF. In as far as reference is made to him here, it is clear that there were either open lines of communication between himself and the UFH, EL activists, or they had met him face to face. The latter was not prodded in the interviews; however, it is clear enough that he was involved in guiding some decisions of the UFH, EL FMF activists.

*“We learned how other comrades can just think and do, positive outcome learned they made me to analyse before I act. Student formations differ from campus to*

*campus, level of political consciousness and level of clarity is advanced in other provinces compared to activists of organizations in Gauteng. Unity of purpose we got to make BCM (Buffalo City Municipality) traffic to stand still and we got the Mayor's attention. Proper decisive force for Eastern Cape, came from UFH, Rhodes, NMMU not been forthcoming in Fees must fall 2015-2016. We got to know more about challenges faced by other university students in their campus. The type of thinking that brought in by other guys from other campuses across ideological learning and education. We debated on the fate of the movement and where it was going."*

*"We got to meet as political organizations given our ideological backgrounds. As a result we became united and worked for a generational mission. We even discussed not wearing our political regalias in order to show unity."*

Based on the collective action between different universities, as mentioned by one of the UFH, EL activist above, another activist spoke at some length of the arduous journeys he had to undertake, without much money, hitch-hiking from East London to Umthatha once (a 3 hours journey) in order to attend and coordinate Eastern Cape FMFM there, just another display of commitment to a cause by young people. From this exercise, all the activist had to say is that he learned and benefitted from the knowledge that what he was doing was for future generations. Based on the reflections made on the movement, and understanding its political importance, UFH, EL activists in close working relationships and consultations with FMF activists at UFH itself, nationally and provincially, all discussed means to show solidarity in order to grow and unite the student struggle, even deciding not to wear party regalias as indicated from the quote. From the above results, it is possible to argue that FMF grew and was sustained by not much, except the political will and maturing of the activists as they worked and learned from each other on various issues affecting the movement.

### **Police Brutality, Arrests and Excessive Force as Major Problems Encountered by UFH, EL FMF Activists**

The overwhelming response that we received during this research, as we questioned UFH, EL MFM leaders about the challenges they encountered during FMF, was that they all never failed to mention how police use of teargas and man handling of students, and themselves was what they found challenging the most. The following

responses from the FMF leaders from UFH are typical of the responses we received on challenges:

*“Some of the students since the start of fees must fall suffered post traumatic disorder from the shooting and loud noises of stun grenades. Some of the things that happened within the movement were unnecessary. Students were demoralized and fearing to embark in protest fearing a criminal record.”*

*“Fees must fall killed some students in October 2016, I got arrested at UFH inside ABC Hall.”*

*“Students can be fearful of police violence, because we got teargased. Police disturbed student mobilization during the protests and police used rubber bullets, stun grenades and other methods which instil fear in students and leadership. But as a leader you have to stand your grounds.”*

*“The movement was leaderless as a result we got victimized by police because we have no intelligence and leadership. Opportunism cheeped in at times constituency not following orders from leadership. The latter was caused by anger of authorities not listening to students.”*

The above responses are quite disturbing, this is the more so because of the widespread harassment reported by FMF activists in other parts of the country, meaning, police violence towards students was national, and not an isolated incident; however, there was limited reports of this in the media. There was also a very equally disturbing issue reported by one of the UFH, EL fallists, who told us how he also got threats and intimidation from certain students telling him he will not finish his degree, as to why or for what, he was not further questioned. However, it is important to interrogate this further as there were incidents in the FMFM where differences in ideologies and approaches to issues caused rifts and even fights.

### **The FMF activists Have Used their knowledge Gained from FMF to Educate Others and Promote and Advocate for Justice in their Spheres of Influence**

*“I am now leading the central region of SASCO as University student’s organization. For instance you go to TVET College and you see the structural deficiencies and other problems they are having there, and we end up negotiating for them. We learnt*

*to negotiate; we also learnt how to organize students for protest or meetings. We are now good at organizing protests, negotiating, mobilizing and also the way to obtain financial resources in a strike situation because strikes have to be funded. Because comrades must be transported around, there must be food to eat; all these things we learnt from Fees Must Fall.”*

*“Our main focus as organization (Afrocentric Study Group) was decolonization of education. So we want to see decolonized education. Our education has to change and be African Centred. For instance as a Social Science teacher I keep telling my learners that these are not the textbooks we should be using and reading textbooks that we written by colonizers. I do conscientizing of school learners and my colleagues in the Social Science Unit Department when we are sitting and discussing our lessons and content. I emphasise certain things like that of Mahatma Ghandi was a racist and he was against blacks and he used words like Kaffirs.”*

*“We are shop stewards where we work, we travel and go and meet other people around the country, we know what is a difference between a legal strike and illegal strike so you teach other people who do not know about this because learnt this when we organized FMF strikes and some of the students got arrested. We learnt coordination as we worked with different institutions.”*

The responses above demonstrate a very important fundamental change in the character and location of former UFH, EL activists today. It has been two years since the FMF protests, and so some of the activists have now exited university and are now employed, therefore, this means they are now workers, and this has an important bearing on their past as activists in FMF, good or bad. However, from the former activists now employed, they have found areas at work where they can apply things they learnt from FMF, as demonstrated from the responses above. The FMF activist still active at UFH, EL also continue to search for strategies to apply their FMF knowledge in various political domains that they are active in, acting as change agents where they are asked or called upon to assist at the university and in their workplace, for those who have gotten employed.

## **4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The 2015/16 FMF protests were the biggest protests of their kind by university students post 1994 South Africa. University students across South Africa united in protest, resisting fees in higher education, a culture of university based racism, patriarchy and the lack of transformation manifested in the colonially orientated curriculum and dominance of white, male staff at predominantly white universities in the country (Luescher, et. al, *ibid*; Badat, *ibid*; Le Grange, *ibid*; CHE, *ibid*; and Chinguno, *ibid*). In order to facilitate, maintain and sharpen the strength and focus of the above student protests, FMF, UFH, EL activists equipped themselves with political ideas and knowledge whilst also learning politically from FMF activists from other Eastern Cape universities about tactics and strategies for resistance. The new ideas such as gender, and decolonization and political tactics such as strike organizing, to mention but a few that were learned by UFH, EL FMF activists, went into directing and maintaining student FMF protests at UFH, EL, the UFH, FMF protests, in turn, fed into the then ongoing FMFM nationally.

In order to facilitate and maintain a movement with so many social justice demands in 2015/16, leading activists had to make serious personal sacrifices, but, in the process, gained and benefitted from such sacrifices and activism as they found themselves working with other activists from UFH, EL, who belong to different political and social student organizations, as well as coordinating united action with FMF activists from other universities in the Eastern Cape, universities like Walter Sisulu University (WSU) whose other founding campuses are in Umthatha, a 3 hours' drive from East London.

These findings are important, in a context where university students' activism in Africa, South Africa and other parts of the world, is generally analyzed with broad social outcomes in mind. The findings in this research demonstrate how there are too micro-individualized benefits to student activists who take part in university based protests such as FMF. More importantly though, these findings corroborate Hilliard's (2010) findings that university student leaders benefit from their leadership of students by serving as agents of positive change in the classroom and at university level; help change power dynamics and create new forums for learning how to speak out on their own in a variety of arenas and on a range of issues as well planning and

implementing programs better and take more risks willingly. The UFH, EL activist confessed having gained from travelling across different campuses understanding what activists there are planning and doing to ensure the unity and continued action of FMF.

The UFH, EL FMF activists benefitted from intellectual growth as a result of the movement's articulation of new ideas and critical democracy related issues such gender equality, patriarchy, insourcing, but this was not adequate as political organizing and consolidation of these issues required organized approaches. UFH, EL activists spoke at different length regarding the various forums and cell groups where discussions on various issues such gender, decolonization and free fee higher education were discussed, and these were run and maintained by the leading activists themselves. The UFH, EL South African Students Congress (SASCO) activists, for example, were not so well briefed on the topic of decolonization, and indeed, even felt it was too ambitious, however, the activists from the Pan Africanist Student Movement (PASMA) appeared more at ease and shared their views generously on how they helped educate and debate with other FMF participants.

The above findings of intellectual and political growth are shared too by some Wits fallists like Simamkele Dlakavu who found their involvement in the Wits FMF 'personally and politically fulfilling', (Dlakavu, *ibid*: 110). We also showed in the literature review section how other Wits fallists gained political understanding and maturity of the movement, and this political maturity was also found in the UFH, EL FMF activists as well. UFH, EL activists grew more political and more determined as they got to discuss with other activists in UFH and beyond, regarding what the FMF means to them and to the universities and from this they invariably worked towards taking action to build, sustain and enrich the focus of the FMFM on its farsighted goals of transformation. It is largely based on this political maturity and the organizing of FMF in UFH, EL and elsewhere that many of the activists of the movement gained popularity and exposure in the social media and television, as we noted in the literature section of this study. At UFH, EL, activists worked tirelessly to maintain unity and purpose of the movement, they ignored and suspended their ideological and practice tools like political T-Shirts and other party regalia in order to elevate unity of purpose behind FMF, a national cause.

From the point of view of research, Zeldin et al. attribute to youth, based on in-depth interview results with 200 youth interns and volunteers from a youth organization, the capacity for youth to bring in fresh ideas, to stick to the vision and mission of their chosen cause. Zeldin's results demonstrate youths' high capacity to focus the vision and mission of the cause; however, causes also need to be serviced and kept alive in order to make an impact. The FMF leaders at UFH, EL stood the ground to highlight and amplify the vision and mission of FMF, despite heavy police violence against UFH, EL activists and others across the country. But another useful point in Zeldin's research is his pointing out that youth are sensitive to social justice, and indeed, South Africa is a country with high levels of social injustices, from racial to gender discrimination and economic inequalities and poverty amidst plenty, it is, therefore, not surprising that resistance against the above injustices occurred in universities.

What was striking as part of the larger findings of this research study is when asked about the motivations for joining the 2015/16 FMF protests, the UFH activists pointed out that they are not protesting or joined to resist higher education fees, just for their own benefit, but rather that they are doing so in order for their siblings and future generations to enjoy access to free, decolonized quality, higher education. The latter issue is compelling and links up with the paragraphs above. UNICEF (n.d.) points out that political participation by young people may lead to the strengthening of young people's understanding of human rights and democracy, and this further explains why protests for human dignity against institutional racism and rights to free education started and were so fiercely fought for by South African youths from universities. Furthermore, the starting of FMF at universities such as UFH and others confirms the power of higher education or universities to contribute to the production of citizens with a willingness to review and renew prevailing ideas, policies and practices based on a common good (CIHE, *ibid*: 34-35).

**For UFH, EL activists, their leading of the FMF protests benefitted them by growing them intellectually and politically, especially as the key features of activists' work involved deep reflection on the meaning of the movement, not only to students and to activists, but the whole society too and to the universities. This sharpened activists understanding of themselves that, in**

**turn, made it possible to articulate with clarity the objectives and goals of FMF and its importance and role in universities, in students and in South African society at large. The political clarity and understanding of FMF objectives by the activists led to them working tirelessly to sustain and grow their movement and its demands.**

The second finding on this research is the excessive use of force by police against the protesting students in 2015 and, especially in 2016 against the UFH, EL leaders and the students participating in the FMF protests in general. While violence was noted as a key challenge for the FMF in 2015/16, these concerns of violence are generally directed towards, or sympathetic to, non-protesting university students, staff, university management and university property (Duncan, J, 2016; CIHE, *ibid*: 24), with absolutely no mention or debate on the impact of the violence and how it affected protesting students or activists of FMF. Anyhow, even talk and research done on deducing the impact of 2015/16 FMF is based on violence, and physical violence, and no mention of the emotional violence of institutional racism, financial hardships and pain not visible to analysts, but a lived reality for many of the ordinary students and activists of FMF (Molobye, T., 2017: 121-124 In: Chinguno et Al.).

In the Commission of Inquiry on Higher Education report (CIHE, *ibid*: 12-13), there is a focus given to the event of the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, 2015, when students and workers joined together in a protest to Parliament in Cape Town, a protest that brought together the demands for free higher education and an end to outsourcing of workers at universities. There was heavy police presence with police armed with guns, stun grenades and tear gases. Violence broke out in the process of the protests, as a result, 23 protestors were arrested, and many others were injured (CIHE, *ibid*: 13). The above incident served to escalate protests across South African universities. The escalation of protests after attacks and violence against university students and their leaders is not surprising, as researchers have demonstrated that the manner in which authorities respond to university based protestors, especially to student leaders, plays an important part in the escalation or ceasing of violence (Leuscher, *ibid*: 41). There are wide records of physical and emotional violence that was meted out against FMF activists during the 2015/16 protests by the police force, for

example, Neo Sambo (2017: 57 in Chinguno et Al.) describes how the victimization of random, peaceful students took place: “The police were heavily outnumbered by the students and visibly baffled. This made arresting the protesting students difficult and I suspect that this is why they were arresting any student they could find; and, obviously, those who were not being particularly violent were easier to arrest. Some of the SAPS officers would simply provoke students in desperate attempts to make arrests.”

A comrade of Sambo, Ntokozo Moloji (2017: 62), also decried police excessive use of force and its impact on FMF: “The excessive force of state ordered violence, accompanied by misrepresentation and selective reporting by state paid media and lack of planning on the part of students, perhaps killed the #FeesMustFall movement.” The finding in this study with UFH, EL FMF activists, namely, that police brutality was one of their worst challenges, serves to demonstrate that police violence against FMF activists was not an isolated, region based incident, but was a nationwide phenomenon, and this ought to have caused concerns for university authorities in South Africa, given how the South African police dealt with miners’ protests in Marikana, in the North West, precipitating the first post 1994 massacre. Furthermore, the UFH, EL activists spoke of how they were arrested and shot with rubber bullets, similar tactics used in the dealing with fallists from other universities and campuses in South Africa. It would seem that the SAPS is frequently being drawn into university based student protests more and more in the post 1994 era, and this should be prevented at all cost, if universities seek to continue to claim some moral righteousness in South African society.

The above findings from this research study, together with research projections of the path ahead for African higher education student politics, indicate that there is urgency and importance that needs to be attached to university student based activism in the continent. For example, Falola (2004) long noted that where economies are undeveloped and politics unstable, African youths join protest movements to demand change; however, he does not mention how governments in Africa respond to these youth rebellions. The latter is a problem, especially since other prominent researchers on African youths, such as Alcinda Honwana (2014: 2429), warn that the major causes of recent protests led by young people in Africa,

such as the Tunisia rebellions that ousted Ben Ali, the Mozambican food riots and similar others are the reflection of the African youths marginalization and their struggle for their social, economic and political emancipation. Honwana (ibid: 2429) argues that political instability, bad governance and failed neo-liberal social and economic policies have exacerbated long standing societal problems and diminished young people's ability to support themselves and their families. The responses to youth protests is a major issue that needs careful scrutiny, as violence seems to be the most preferred method for many university authorities as has been the case with the UFH, EL experience and nationwide in FMF protests.

The climate of economic hardships on students and the persistence of imminent threat of many students in higher educational institutions through university fees has been the key point of resistance that sparked FMF in 2015/16 in South Africa. The South African Commission of Inquiry on Higher Education (CIHE, ibid: 34) notes that "inequality is still widely evident in terms of access to higher education and in the share of benefits that it brings." Bad governance is also one of the other calling cries for some of the FMF activists who see the call for a free fee higher education as empty if and when the impact of corruption and abuse of government funds is not tackled in South Africa (Masilela, ibid: 73). Anger and frustration are key themes that recur on the book by the Wits fallists, somewhat suggesting that there were students who, faced with recalcitrant university authorities, got fed up, and said "enough is enough" and, as result, vandalized and blockaded and even threw stones at buildings and university authorities and the police, and this is important to highlight, if violence is to be tackled in university student protests such as FMF.

The above is critical, based on the observation by Fongwa and Chifon (ibid) which shows how lack of cordial dialogue between university students and university administration seem to dominate many interactions such as protests in Africa. This is indeed a situation that needs to be rectified as property, students, staff and, even the leaders of protests, as shown in this research, all end up paying a severe psychological price for the university conflicts between students and university administrations. There are strong talks, especially after the passing of UCT's Professor Bongani Mayosi, who committed suicide as a result of suffering from depression. Some, like the new Vice Chancellor, have come out saying the FMF

protests of 2015/16 had a strong impact on Mayosi, who was called a *coconut* by UCT students during the protests. Some have come out to criticize the VC's suggestions; especially student leaders who argue that the FMF protests has had an even worse impact on students, even claiming that three prominent activists of that era have since committed suicide, also as a result of depression suffered from participating in the 2015/16 FMF protests.

The current harsh reality from the foregoing is that universities have acted with little regard for protesting students in 2015/16 FMF, in UFH, EL and across the country, and, as observed by Jane Duncan (*ibid*), the universities administrations "have responded by securitizing their campus; seeking wide-ranging interdicts against students and deploying private security guards." The South African police service, on their part, and, as we found out from UFH, EL FMF activists, used extra force in dealing with students during protests, which resulted in many getting arrested for no reason, and many still getting criminal records for public violence against their names, and others were shot with rubber bullets, instilling general fear on activists at large. Research demonstrates that violence used to suppress university student protests begets more violence, especially in future protests as violent approaches to student activism tend to give rise to the pursuit of more confrontational ones in future (Luescher, *ibid*: 41).

Whether due to police violence against the FMF, EL activists, or because of the violence other possible future activists saw on television and social media, South African university activists may intensify violence towards and against university administrations, and, most importantly, against security forces such as the South Africa police service or even campus based security agencies, because of the violence that was meted out to students in 2015/16, a seriously disturbing projection, but a real one, nonetheless.

The third finding in this research was that the yesteryear leaders of FMF at UFH in East London continue to find means to apply the lessons and insights they learned or acquired from FMF to make their political organizations at UFH more democratic,

and those who are now employed, on their part, have taken leadership roles in their workplaces and also act to advise their colleagues how to engage in more legal, yet robust, ways in representing their interests and voices in work related matters. The results from this study indicate that there may be a democratic dividend to be gained from past leaders of student protests such as FMF for both universities and society. In other words, we ought to consider the potential contributions student leaders can make to the public sphere and in their workplaces, both the private and public sectors, as this is where most university graduates, including former activists, end up.

There was an article in the media regarding the lives of those who were activists, which was written by Yoliswa Sobuswa, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, earlier this year (2018). In it, Sobuswa notes that several of the FMF leaders are still fighting to clear their names in court, whilst others have been suspended. Sobuswa goes further on to cite other activists who still carry on planting positive lessons learnt from FMF in their studies and lives. For example, Sthembiso Ndlovu of Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) Soshanguve campus, who is preparing for his B.Ed. honours graduation, said, "I have been committed in helping our brothers and sisters. I spent most of my time in the struggle to transform higher education. The struggle is not yet over." Shaeera Kalla, from Wits University, is now a social activist working with a group of young professionals to deal with social and developmental issues. It is important that future research on FMF closely pays attention to this issue of student activists; after their activism, there is likely to be transformative insights that maybe gained from this type of research and work.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **Chapter Five**

From the foregoing findings of this study, it appears that there are important considerations to be made when looking at the issue of youth protests and its impact on young people, who lead such protests. This is particularly important, since the results in this study demonstrate not just how those who led the 2015/6 FMF protests at UFH, EL experienced intellectual and political leadership growth as leaders, but that, moreover, these gains were obtained at the expense of serious danger to their bodies and their psychological well-being, a feature of youth protests still not fully given attention by researchers and journalists covering the issue of youth and violent protests in South Africa and Africa as a whole. But what makes this study even more unique is its documentation of the manner in which youth leaders continue to apply the knowledge they gain from participating in protests like FMF in other areas of their lives, be it student politics and in workplaces, for those who have left the academia and are now working as professionals.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Writers on FMFM, a few that there are, have demonstrated how South Africa universities endangered protesting students by calling in police and private security companies, but the students affected had never before been heard regarding how they were affected by the securitization of their campus and their confrontations with police. The above has been remedied through this research.

One of the key insights that emerged for the researcher in this study is that youth activism and leading a nationwide protest like FMF, for instance, is a double edged sword. Whilst the experience may have benefits, such as intellectual growth, as shown in the discussion on finding one above, youth activism in the context of intense confrontations with armed police could have dangerous and emotionally challenging results. Most participants in this study indicated that they experienced violence from the police, and this is very serious, as universities are supposed to safeguard the physical and emotional wellness of their student populations.

Student leaders at UFH, EL campus complained of heavy hand of police on protesting students, and this is very important because police brutality in South Africa is at an all-time high. For example, there are widespread events from the country where police brutality and quickness for fire on protesting crowds has resulted in the loss of many lives, with the North West Marikana mine massacre being the most horrific incident in recent memory.

Universities such as the University of Fort Hare should ensure students, those protesting and those not protesting are emotionally and physically not harmed. During FMF 2015/16, South African universities implemented measures that endangered protesting student's lives through their deployment of police and private security companies on campuses (Duncan, 2016).

Society should encourage young people to speak against social injustices, as this could also benefit, not just the youth, but the society as well. Universities should at all times protect their students, whether they are on protests or not as this strengthens young people's trust on the institutions, failing which, university property and staff become vulnerable to opportunistic leaders.

Police ought never to carry firearms and other life threatening weapons when dealing with student protestors at South African Universities or in schools. Universities must ensure that they create learning friendly and supportive facilities for students as these are at the heart of student grievances not only in South Africa but throughout the continent.

Universities and SRC across South Africa must work with the courts of law to free student leaders who continue to attend court cases as a result of having led their student constituencies under the 2015/16 FMF. Universities must proactively engage, recognize and respect student grievances and create conflict resolution platforms to address students' bread and butter issues, before students take to the streets.

Universities and SRCs must educate students on various approaches to conflict resolutions and assess how student leaders ought to manage and deal with students in times of crisis, in order to allow student leaders who continue to attend

court cases as a result of having led their student constitutes under the 2015/16 FMF.

Universities must proactively engage, recognize and respect student grievances and create conflict resolution platforms to address students' bread and butter issues before students take to the streets. Universities and SRCs must educate students on the various approaches to conflict resolutions resources, and assess on how student leaders ought to manage and deal with students in times of crisis in order to allow student leaders to work with their followers, thus eliminating through and buildings in South African Universities during 2015/16 FMF, including UFH, EL.

### **CONCLUSION**

In this study we have shown that those who led 2015/16 FMF at UFH, EL experienced a mixed bag of results from gaining in intellectual growth and political leadership to being brutalized through police confrontations and we also showed how today the same leaders act as agents of change in various domains of society. Given how South Africa is seen as a protest capital and that FMF is a reflection of youth's involvement in such protests, this research is invaluable for those who seek to come to terms with what it means to be a young university student who protests in post 1994 South Africa today.

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**APPENDIX 1A**

**NAME OF INSTITUTION: University of Fort Hare, East London Campus**

**NAME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Mr. Lucky Makhosini Kunene**

**NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT: Department of Sociology**

**TEL NO: 043 704 7089**

**CONSENT FORM**

**(PERSPECTIVES OF FEESMUSTFALL LEADERS)**

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

You are being asked to participate in this research study because...you were part of the feesmustfall...leaders.....

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to...interview leaders of the 2015-2016...feesmustfall.....

**PROCEDURES**

As a participant, you will be enrolled in the study and.....you will be interviewed using a an *in depth* interview technique.

**RISKS**

Some of the questions on the questionnaires you will be completing may touch on sensitive areas. However, every effort will be made by the researchers to minimize your discomfort. You are encouraged to discuss with the research staff and/or coordinator any negative or difficult feelings or experiences you have as result of participating in this research project. If at anytime you feel you would like to stop your participation in the research study, you will be free to do so.

**COSTS AND FINANCIAL RISKS**

There are no financial costs directly associated with participation in this project. Services from researchers and support staff will be made available to you.

**BENEFITS**

There is no guarantee that you will benefit directly from this study. However, it is likely that the study may benefit the community through.....

**COMPENSATION**

You will not receive any compensation for participation in this study

**ALTERNATIVES**

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to participate.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made by the investigators to keep all information collected in this study strictly confidential, except as may be required by court order or by law. If any publication results from this research, you will not be identified by name.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to refuse participation. You are encouraged to ask questions concerning the study at any time as they occur to you during the research. Any significant findings developed during the course of the study that may relate to your willingness to continue participation will be provided to you.

### DISCLAIMER/WITHDRAWAL

You agree that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and that you may withdraw at anytime without prejudicing your standing within (*the University*).

### SUBJECT RIGHTS

If you have any questions pertaining to your participation in this research study, you may contact the Principal investigator, (*Lucky Makhosini Kunene*), by telephoning (043 704 7089).

### CONCLUSION

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read and understood the consent form and that you agree to participate in this research study.

.....  
Subject's signature  
.....  
Interviewer's signature  
.....  
Witness's signature

..... 02 August 2017 .....  
Date  
..... 02 August 2017 .....  
Date  
..... 02 AUGUST 2017 .....  
Date

### SOURCE of the Consent Form:

Bless, C., Highson-Smith, C., and Kagee, A. (eds) (2011). *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective*. Juta: Cape Town, South Africa.

**#FEESMUSTFALL QUESTIONNAIRE**

**MOTIVATION FOR JOINING FEESMUSTFALL**

**1. WHY DID YOU JOIN THE FEESMUSTFALL PROTESTS?**

**2. WAS FEESMUSTFALL WELL SUPPORTED BY STUDENTS?**

**3. WHY DO YOU THINK OTHER STUDENTS SUPPORTED AND JOINED IN FEESMUSTFALL?**

**BENEFITS, AND/OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FEESMUSTFALL MOVEMENT ON CAMPUS**

**4. WHAT CAN YOU SAY OR POINT TO AS EVIDENCE THAT FEESMUSTFALL PROTESTS MANAGED TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF THE STUDENTS?**

**5. WAS FEESMUSTFALL SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR VIEW?**

PERSONAL OR INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS DUE TO FEESMUSTFALL PARTICIPATION

**6. WILL YOU SAY THAT YOU AS A LEADER PERSONALLY BENEFITTED FROM FEESMUSTFALL PROTESTS, OR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE PROTESTS?**

**7. DID YOU GAIN ANY VALUABLE POLITICAL EXPERIENCE, OR OTHERWISE FROM LEADING THE FEESMUSTFALL PROTESTS?**

HOW AND WHAT CONNECTED YOUR PROTESTS TO OTHERS HAPPENING IN OTHER UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

**8. DID YOU HAVE ANY POLITICAL CONNECTION WITH THE LEADERS OF FEESMUSTFALL FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES, OR INSTITUTIONS?**

**9. HOW DID YOU FORM THE RELATIONSHIP AND LINK WITH OTHER STUDENTS ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION AND STUDENTS FORMATIONS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS?**

**10. WHAT WERE THE COMMON CONCERNS THAT YOU DISCUSSED OR THAT UNITED STUDENTS WITHIN THE INSTITUTION AND BEYOND IT TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS?**

**11. WHAT BENEFITS CAN YOU SAY WERE GAINED FROM WORKING WITH STUDENTS FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, WITHIN AND OUTSIDETHE INSTITUTION?**

CHALLENGES LEADERS FACED BEHIND THE FEESMUSTFALL SCENES

**12. WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU EXPERIENCE DURING FEESMUSTFALL AS A COLLECTIVE, AND YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL?**

FEESMUSTFALL AND DECOLONIZATION

**13. DID YOU CONTRIBUTE ANY IDEAS ON THE FEESMUSTFALL DECOLONIZATION ISSUE ON YOUR CAMPUS AND OUTSIDE?**

**14. WHAT IS DECOLONIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YOU?**

**15. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ENSURE THAT HIGHER EDUCATION IS DECOLONIZED?**

**16. WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK THE FEESMUSTFALL PROTEST PLAYED IN FURTHERING THE DEBATE ON DECOLONIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA?**

**17. ANY THOUGHTS ON WHAT STUDENTS AND THEIR LEADERS DO TO FURTHER THE DEBATE ON DECOLONIZATION?**

**FEESMUSTFALL AND THE VIOLENCE DURING PROTESTS**

**18. WILL YOU SAY THERE WAS VIOLENCE DURING FEESMUSTFALL PROTESTS?**

**19. WHAT IN YOUR VIEW WAS THE LEADING CAUSE OF THE VIOLENCE DURING FEESMUSTFALL PROTESTS?**

**20. HOW CAN VIOLENCE BE MINIMISED IF AT ALL, DURING STUDENT PROTESTS SUCH AS FEESMUST FALL?**

**21. WILL YOU SAY VIOLENCE HAD ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE PROTEST MOVEMENT?**

LEGACY AND FUTURE OF FEESMUSTFALL

**22. HOW WILL YOU REMEMBER THE FEESMUSTFALL PROTESTS OF 2014-2016?**

**23. DO YOU BELIEVE ANOTHER FEESMUSTFALL IS POSSIBLE OR HAVE ISSUES BEEN RESOLVED AMICABLY?**