

**An analytical tale of the social media discursive enactment of  
networked everyday resistance during the #feesmustfall social  
movement in South Africa**



by

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## Declaration

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## **Acknowledgements**

To God be the glory, for mercy above all brought me here...

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## **Dedication**

To Madame Josephine Ngo Nka'a and Monsieur Joseph Kona, my parents, for they took from their lives to make mine, giving me the opportunity to go this far and feeding my body with the fruits of their pain and my soul with God's words: I dedicate this work.

## List of abbreviations and acronyms

CEP: Cultural Emergent Property of relationship

CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication

CMD: Computer-Mediated Discourse

CMDA: Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis

DREI: D=describe the events of interest; R=retroduce explanation; mechanisms; E=eliminate false hypotheses; I=identify the correct mechanisms

e-Participation: Electronic Public Participation

eReadiness: Electronic Readiness

HCI: Human-computer Interaction

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IS: Information Systems

IT: Information Technology

M/M approach: Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach

M/M cycle: Morphogenetic/Morphostatic cycle

NSM: New Social Movement

PC: Personal Computer

PEP: Personal/People Emergent Property of relationship

ReMDA: Realist Model of social media Discursive Action

SCM: Stereotypes Content Model

SMA: Social Media Affordance

SNS: Social Networking Site

SEP: Social Emergent Property of relationships

SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa / Sub-Saharan African

TCA: Theory of Communicative Action

TEUM: Technology Emergent Usage Model

ReMDA: Realist Model of social media Discursive Action

# **An analytical tale of the social media discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance during the #feesmustfall social movement in South Africa**

## **Abstract**

Social media are a space for discussions, debates and deliberations about personality, culture, society, and actual experiences of social actors in South Africa. They offer an unexpected opportunity for the broader consideration and inclusion of community members' *voices* in governance decision making and policy processes. They also offer opportunities to engage, mobilise and change people and society in impressive scale, speed and effect: They have mobilising and transformative powers emanating from their interaction with the impetus of the agency of community members seeking better conditions of living. The magnitude of the effects of these powers makes it imperative to have a better understanding of their workings. Social media have been used in numerous social movements as the medium of communication to mobilise, coordinate, and broadcast protests. However, social media were never a guarantee of success as most movements using them did not achieve significant results. Yet, governments in developed and developing countries tend to engage inadequately with social media supported movements. The research problem is that the contribution of social media to the transformation of the social practice of discourse, which causes SSA community members' agential impetus (collective intentionality for action) to generate a discourse of resistance on social media during social movements, is not well understood.

The main research question is: *Why are South African community members using social media to enact online discursive resistance during social movements?* The aim of the research is to explain, from a critical realism point of view, Sub-Saharan African community members' emergent usage of social media during social movements, by providing a contextualised social history (a tale) of South African community members' practice of online discursive enactment of resistance. The emergent usage of social media of concern is conceptualised as "*discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance*" within a dialectical space of interaction conceptualised as "*space of autonomous resistance*"; an instance of a communication space allowing for *transformative negation* to occur.

The research follows Bhaskar's Critical Realism as a philosophical paradigm. Critical Realism seeks to explain phenomena by *retroducting* (retrospective inference) causal explanations from empirically observable phenomena to the generative mechanisms which caused them. The research was designed as a qualitative, processual and *retroductive* inquiry based on the Morphogenetic/Morphostasis approach with two phases: an empirical research developing the case of South African community members' emergent usage of social media during the #feesmustfall social movement, looking for demi-regularities in social media discourse; and a transcendental research reaching into the past to identified significant events, objects and entities which tendencies are responsible for the shape of observed discourse.

In the first phase, a case study was developed from data collected on the social media platform Twitter™, documents, and in-depth interviews of South African community members. The data collected were analysed using qualitative content analysis (QCA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to unveil demi-regularities; moving from the observable individual *strategic orientation of messages* to discourses, thus to the tendencies of relational emergent properties of systemic magnitude which structure local discourses and are transformed by them. Then, the social media-induced morphogenesis or transformation of South African community members' discursive action was postulated in an analytical history of emergence (or analytical tale) of their usage of social media within a "*space of autonomous resistance*" during social movements.

The findings of the research suggest that South African community members authored 3 discourses of resistance on Twitter™: #feesmustfall discourses of struggle, identity and oppression. They identified as "*student qua black-child*" stepping into the "*Freedom fighter*" role against the hegemonic post-apartheid condition curtailing their aspirations. It was found that social media *socio-cultural embeddedness and under-design* (Western European socio-cultural globalising underpinning features and functional features of the platforms) which interaction with the local socio-cultural mix (post-apartheid socio-cultural tendencies for domination/power, spiral of silence, and legitimacy/identification) resulted in *misfits and workarounds* enhancing individual emotional conflict and aligning towards a *socio-cultural opportunistic contingent complementarity* integration in the deployment of discourse. That integration was actualised as a *mediatization* emergent property through *asignification/signification* of mainstream discourses of liberal democracy, colonial capitalism, national democratic revolution, free and decolonised education, black consciousness and *Fallism*. That *mediatization* through re-signification of the struggle for freedom created a communication "*space of autonomous resistance*" where *networked freedom fighters* enacted *discursive everyday resistance* against the hegemonic forces of students' precariousness.

The contribution of the research includes a realist model of social media discursive action (ReMDA); an explanation of South African community members' deployment of discourse over social media during social movement and telling the tale of the transformation of discursive practices with the advent of social media in South Africa.

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# Chapter I: The problem with not-understanding the changes in SSA social media usage

The aim of this research is to explain Sub-Saharan African community members<sup>1</sup> emergent usage of social media during social movements, by telling an analytical tale of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter's* social media discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance during #feesmustfall social movement in South Africa.

This chapter introduces the thesis. It presents the background to the research problem, the statement of the research problem, research questions, research aims, research methodological strategy, and the layout of thesis chapters.

## 1.1 Background to the research problem

### 1.1.1 The inadequate engagement with social media facilitated networked social movements

In this era of pervasive computing, globalisation and rising dilution of identities, sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is awakening to unusual social movements threatening post-colonial socio-economic and political orders, on the back of the Internet and its social media. Between 2001 and 2016, SSA has witnessed an impressive number of social movements carried out by the youth (Eckert, 2017; Ekine, 2010; Honwana, 2012, 2014). Community members involved in the protests are tied up in online social “*networks of outrage and hope*”, as pointed out by Castells (2015); calling for democracy, a betterment of local socio-economic conditions and bestowing scepticism for globalisation and neoliberalism (De Waal & Ibreck, 2013; Larmer, 2010). These movements involve a dramatically increasing usage of ICTs and particularly of social media. They succeed in garnering massive crowds simultaneously in locations apart, ensuing in dramatic outcomes including loss of lives, extensive damage to property, policy change and even political regime change (Honwana, 2014). These consequences are also the result of authorities' inadequate engagement with movements based on repressive strategies including arresting potential leaders, starving the movement of much-needed resources (including the Internet) and using violence against protesters. This inadequate engagement has rather contributed to redefining and crystallising ideological lines, socio-political identities and movement demands (Gumede, 2016; Suh, Vasi, & Chang, 2017). This inadequate engagement seems to stem from a misunderstanding or dismissal of SSA community members' socio-cultural trajectory and of the central role of social media standing as an enabler of a “*space of autonomous resistance*”, a “*space of autonomy*” allowing the expression of community members' agential impetus of outrage and hope (Castells, 2015).

### 1.1.2 Social media are not a guarantee of social movement success

Many social movements succeeded with the facilitation of social media while others failed. Further, many movements succeeded in the past without any social media around.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Sub-Saharan African community members* are people living in Africa with membership in communities present in the continent's socio-cultural environment.

### **a) Social media were there in successes and in failures**

As a matter of fact, unprecedented events such as:

- the ascent to power of President Barack Obama in the USA (Wattal, Schuff, Mandviwalla, & Williams, 2010),
- the Arab Spring in Northern Africa and the Middle East for dignity and better governance (L. Anderson, 2011; Arafa & Armstrong, 2015; Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011; Khan, 2012),
- the anti-austerity Indignados movement or 15M in Spain (Castaneda, 2012),
- the #OccupyWallStreet movement (Suh et al., 2017) against economic inequality,
- the #blacklivesmatter movement against the undermining of black people in the USA (Carney, 2016),
- the Occupy Nigeria movement (Egbunike & Olorunnisola, 2015; Ojedokun, 2016),
- #thisflag movement against corruption and social injustice in Zimbabwe (Masarurwa, 2016; Mutanana, 2016)
- or the Mexican students #YoSoy132 for media democratisation (Gómez Garcia & Trere, 2014; Gómez, 2012),

wouldn't have been what they were without the activation of social media powers. However, it was also reported that a majority of movement using the Internet and social media fails to achieve any significant effect (Federici, Braccini, & Sæbø, 2015; Hara & Huang, 2011; K. Lewis, Gray, & Meierhenrich, 2014; MacKinnon, 2011).

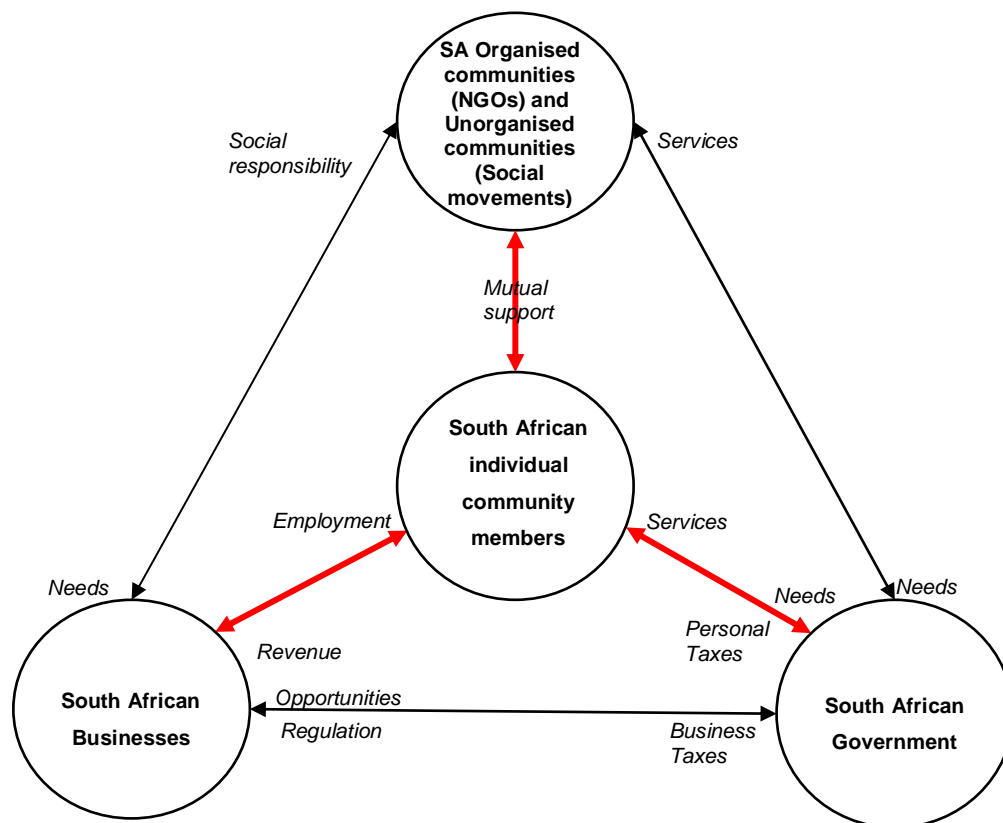
### **b) Social media were not there in many successes**

Furthermore, societies did not wait for social media to rise in massive protest. Media channels of the day like public speeches, mail services, the press, placards, pamphlets, the radio or television helped to spread the message and mobilise for action in social movements and revolutions including the French revolution, the Russian revolution, the Feminist movement, Civil Rights movements in the USA, the LGBTQ movement, Anti-apartheid movements or the Pan-African movement (Briggs & Burke, 2009; Downing, 2001). This is to suggest that social media are not a guarantee to the success of a social movement: other things need to be included to succeed.

#### **1.1.3 Actors of the social practice of SSA social media discourse during social movement**

Social movement activities involve many actors whose contributions are expected to be relevant translations of their interests. These stakeholders can be grouped as individuals, community, business (for profit or not), and government (Taylor & Bytheway, 2006; Taylor, Marshall, & Amiri, 2010). This research only considers individual South African citizens or community members, who are studying, have studied or are related to higher education students; especially the young who represent most social media users, as they post messages of outrage and hope during social movements. Outrage and hope can be expected to have been created by strains in the relationships between *South African community members* and the other stakeholder groups, strains structured according to *Socio-cultural conditioning*, *social media affordances* (possibility for action offered by social media) and their *agential impetus* (collective intentionality for action) to see their lifeworld

improving (See Figure 1.1) (See Section 2.1.2, 3.3.1 and 3.5.5 for definitions of social structures, agency and technology affordances).



**Figure 1.1: Community informatics model for relationships between SSA major actors of society (adapted from (Bytheway, 2014))**

As per Archer’s realist social theory (Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach), actors are agents in a social role. As a consequence, community members would take on social roles on social media and carry them according to their interpretive freedom, their bargaining power and the opportunity cost they can bear (Archer, 2000, 2007a; Preece & Shneiderman, 2009).

#### **1.1.4 Government challenges in understanding the contribution of social media to discourse**

In developed and in developing countries, governments are challenged by the use of social media. These challenges include government infancy in the use of social media (Bonsón, Torres, Royo, & Flores, 2012), the lack of civic-institutional infrastructure (Tambouris et al., 2013), regulatory impediments and local Socio-cultural structure hindrances and enablement (Bertot, Jaeger, & Hansen, 2012). The situation gets more perplexing in the particular case of developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa where government incapability amplifies all of these challenges to impede democratic development altogether (Linde & Karlsson, 2013); with people being intimidated online and offline and Internet connections being suspended every time there is a meagre demonstration (Gumede, 2016).

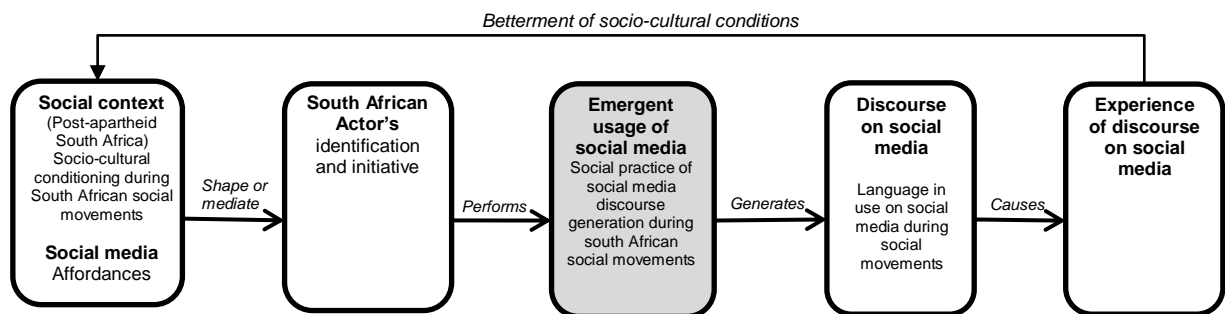
It is important to recognise the use of social media as a complete part of the social practice of discourse; compelling government, as an emanation of the will of people, to be able to engage with

such discourse with an understanding of emergent practices as being the products of interactions between local socio-cultural conditioning, community members agential impetus and social media affordances.

### 1.1.5 The importance of understanding social media contribution to discourse during social movements in SSA

Social media facilitated social movements do not succeed serendipitously. There must be reasons or generative mechanisms or socio-cultural tendencies or emergent properties of relationships able to explain why, when social media meet with a particularly conditioned agential impetus during social movements, outrage and hope erupt offline and online (Castells, 2015). These reasons are expected to have shaped the discourse visible on social media during social movement campaigns.

It can be retroductively hypothesised that the discourse on social media has a causal effect on entities exposed to it. That discourse was produced by a social media mediated social practice of discourse by South African social actors acting upon their social context for the betterment of the conditions of their lifeworld (See Figure 1.2).



**Figure 1.2: An overview of the social practice of using social media to generate discourse during South African social movements**

It must be pointed out that this research is not a study of social movements, a linguistic study of discourse over social media or a media research into social media. This is a research into the change in South African community members' social practice of discourse generation facilitated (mediated) by social media during a social movement. A social movement is an emotionally heightened moment when unexpected activists "let it all out there," "step out in protest" and occupy online and offline public spaces; allowing for the real generative mechanism underpinning their actions to better contrast from the conditioning environment.

The following section presents some reasons for the eruption of social media mediated SSA social movements and follows their outcomes. These outcomes include: the difficult context of sub-Saharan Africa; the relationship of the participating youth harassed by unemployment and *waithood* (or *waiting for adulthood* as a suspended state of transition in to adulthood that has become a new type of adulthood), with mobile telephony and social media; and SSA youth usage of these technologies to express their outrage and hope.

## **1.2 Mobile telephony, social media in outrageous Sub-Saharan Africa**

### **1.2.1 Outrageous sub-Saharan Africa**

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is still comprised of poor countries (Beegle, Christiaensen, Dabalén, & Gaddis, 2016). Community members or ordinary citizens of these countries endure social injustices, social exclusion, overwhelming economic challenges, and poor ICT infrastructure; nevertheless, they seem to have found some autonomy to engage with their “lifeworld’s” trials in deliberations using the Internet and online social network platforms and services (Herbert, Tsegba, Ene, & Onyilo, 2017; Hoseah, 2014; Mangu, 2015).

When they are not at war, SSA countries are ruled by questionable governments in a socioeconomic environment riddled with corruption, impunity, and other social injustices (Herbert et al., 2017; Hoseah, 2014; Mangu, 2015). The manifest lack of trust in government precludes ordinary citizens from engaging with authorities on policy matters (Åström, Karlsson, Linde, & Pirannejad, 2012; Ayo, Mbarika, & Oni, 2015; Cloete, 2012). In addition, many premises of interaction with authorities are socio-culturally unacceptable, further excluding many from attempting to engaging institutions in social policy matters (Chigona, Mbhele, & Kabanda, 2008; Namatovu & Sæbø, 2015).

Moreover, with regard to ICT policy making and implementation, SSA countries institutional arrangements display a lack of political will and support, inadequate technology leadership, badly implemented and context irrelevant IT governance framework, and constant political and bureaucratic infighting (Cloete, 2012). It is therefore not a surprise that they tend to respond inadequately when engaged with social media savvy crowds.

### **1.2.2 Adding mobile telephony to the puddle**

Even though some improvements have been achieved in recent years to reduce the cost of owning a connecting device (Mobile phone, Tablet PC, PC, etc.) as well as the cost of accessing and using Internet services, accessing and using the Internet remains a challenge for the majority of people (Foli & Van Belle, 2015; Namatovu & Sæbø, 2015; Ochara & Mawela, 2013). This situation denotes an exclusion of the public from the decision making about their lives and the existence of their communities (Bwalya, 2009; Chigona et al., 2008; Lorini, Van Zyl, & Chigona, 2014). Fortunately, a majority of South African community members of all age, gender, ethnicity and religious belief have taken up the use of mobile telephony, more often than not using a device carrying social media platforms, on the back of a poor ICT infrastructure and an unreliable electricity supply (De Bruijn, Nyamnjoh, & Brinkman, 2009; Grönlund & Wakabi, 2015; Mitullah, Samson, Wambua, & Balongo, 2016; Ochara & Mawela, 2013).

### **1.2.3 Social media to deliberate, learn and engage with local social challenges**

Just like anywhere else, the SSA youth (between 15 and 40 years of age) are users of these communicative opportunities. They possess the skills to use the technology and tend to be more inclined to rebel against a social order perceived as intolerable (Castells, 2011, 2015). On social media, SSA community members are learning about each other, their interests, local politics and socio-cultural conditions in their lives: they contribute to one another’s learning with information; they

deliberate on issues with brutal honesty; and involve their resources in solidarity against the political class, blatant injustice and oppressive institutions, and in defence of certain social values (Castells, 2015; De Bruijn, Nyamnjoh, & Angwafo, 2010; Mutanana, 2016; Ojedokun, 2016).

#### **1.2.4 Social media, South African youth, and the thrust of 'Waithood'**

The youth that forms the majority of the population in SSA is stuck in a social limbo coined as "waithood" or "Waiting for adulthood", "*describing the prolonged period of suspension when young people's access to social adulthood is delayed or denied*"; a state of transition that has become a new type of adulthood (Gebremariam, 2017; Honwana, 2014; Singerman, 2007; Ungruhe & Esson, 2017). That youth is not idle but is at work, "*mind searching*" for ways to get around cultural, social, political and economic impediments crippling its emancipation and development into adulthood, thrusting them to go out in protest (Honwana, 2014; Nyamnjoh, 2007). As a result, for the past fifteen years, sub-Saharan Africa has been the theatre of an impressive number of social movements led by a youth seeking a way out of *waithood* (H. Dawson, 2014; Ekine, 2010; Honwana, 2012), a way around economic precariousness, social injustices, endemic corruption, and hopeless mal-governance (Honwana, 2014).

The South African youth as their counterparts in the rest of SSA is an avid user of social media (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2015; Patricios & Goldstuck, 2018) confronted with an unemployment rate of over 25%, economic uncertainty with various international and local challenges, and the socio-cultural legacy of the apartheid era. That youth enacted the #feesmustfall social movement, providing a uniquely salient display of an emergent usage of social media that enacts online discursive resistance to the status-quo. The #feesmustfall social movement was exceptional for its unexpected use of social media, its magnitude and speed, the studentship characteristics, the demand for free education and for the decolonisation of education and society at large, its horizontal and distributed leadership and the wave of support it enjoyed both locally and internationally. As a consequence, the case for the research was purposefully selected following a phenomenon-driven approach to elect a conforming representation most likely to bestow the workings of emergent properties of relationships relevant to the emergence of South African social media discourse during social movements (M. Fletcher, Zhao, Plakoyiannaki, & Buck, 2018; Gerring & Cojocar, 2016; Seawright & Gerring, 2008).

Hereafter, it is of great importance to be able to read the needs and desires of the youth in the messages that they utter over social media, to be able to respond to them adequately, de-escalate tensions and prevent dire outcomes from their actions.

### **1.3 The research problem**

The research problem for this study is that the contribution of social media into the transformation of the social practice of discourse which causes SSA community members' *agential impetus* (an individual shared preparedness or collective intentionality for action) to generate a discourse of resistance on social media during social movements is not well understood.

The research problem is about *change* in SSA community members' social practice of discourse as they engage with local social movements over social media. It appears that with the advent of social

media, South African Socio-cultural structures have changed. Their transformation would have caused community members' agency to also change, empowering them to suddenly confidently expose their opinions online and to go on to occupy public spaces offline. The issue here is that the nature of these changes, and especially the contribution of social media to these changes, is still not well understood, as suggested by the paucity in the literature and the state of surprise and panic that these protests tend to lead governments into, as they inadequately respond to them.

It is suggested that governments in developed countries are still looking for guidelines for engaging with the use of social media in social movements (Tambouris et al., 2013); whereas in developing countries, including most SSA countries, despite the impressive penetration of mobile phones, governments are still struggling even to reach out to citizens via social media (Heeks, 2008; Heeks & Arun, 2010; Hellström, 2010); when they do not use them to monitor the population or push propaganda (Gumede, 2016; Linde & Karlsson, 2013).

## **1.4 Research questions and sub-questions**

To investigate the problem of the empowered social media discourse of SSA community members during social movements, especially in South Africa, this research endeavours to answer the question:

### ***Why are South African community members using social media to enact online discursive resistance during social movements?***

This thesis engages the social media communication space of SSA community members during a social movement through the instance of South African social media communication space during the #feesmustfall social movement. It engages the emergent property of relationship supporting South African community members' discourse of resistance arising from their use of social media during the event as a "space of autonomous resistance."

This main research question is broken down into sub-questions that will drive the development of the case study of South African community members' social media discourse during social movements, and the development of the explanatory narrative of that particular usage:

#### Empirical and Exploratory phase: a case research development

- 1. What is the nature of the social media discourse performed by South African community members during the #feesmustfall social movement?*
- 2. What are the contextual, semantic and rhetorical features of South African community members' social media discourse during the #feesmustfall social movement?*
- 3. What are the social media affordances, socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships that are shaping South African community members' interactions during the #feesmustfall social movement?*
- 4. How did South African community members construct, sustain, or fracture alliances and relationships of domination/subordination over social media during the #feesmustfall social movement?*

### Transcendental phase: Transcendental argument development

5. *Before the emergence of social media, how were South African community members' socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships like?*
6. *How has the emergence of social media affected South African communities' socio-cultural interactions?*
7. *How has South African community members' discourse transformed to emerge empowered on social media during social movements?*

## **1.5 Research aim and objectives**

The aim of this research is to explain Sub-Saharan African community members' emergent usage of social media during social movements (see Table 1.1) by providing a contextualised social history of their online discursive enactment of everyday resistance. The research examines the case of the emergent usage of social media during the #feesmustfall social movement in South Africa towards that aim. The research is concerned with the extent and nature of change in the discursive practice of individual community members as they use social media to carry influential messages. Thus, the main research objectives are:

### Exploratory objectives:

- To determine the nature of the social media discourse performed by South African community members during the #feesmustfall social movement;
- To determine South African community members' social media use of language, registers and genre to carry influential messages during the #feesmustfall social movement;
- To determine social media affordances, socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships shaping South African community members' interactions during the #feesmustfall social movement;
- To explain the relationship of South African social media discourse during #feesmustfall with the hegemonic socio-cultural systems conditioning its authors' lifeworld; and devise a realist model of social media discursive action describing how social media discourse emerges from its context during social movements;

### Dialectical and transcendental objectives:

- To reconstitute socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships shaping South African community members' interactions before the emergence of social media;
- To reconstitute the interaction between socio-cultural emergent properties of relationships and the interaction of the product of these with social media affordances.
- To elaborate a morphogenetic sequence of social media discursive action explaining how South African community members' discourse transformed to emerge empowered on social media during social movements;

This research is important in many ways. At first, the results are expected to advance the broader understanding (empirical and theoretical) of the impact of social media on South African socio-cultural

systems and community members' agency; then the results are expected to explain the emergence of the discourse on social media during South African social movements; and finally areas where the critical contribution of social media ensued in sustained spontaneous mass mobilisation are expected to be highlighted (Porwol, Ojo, & Breslin, 2014). These contributions may help improve both social movement online campaigning and the adequacy of government response to social media mediated social movements in South Africa and in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

## 1.6 Research methodological strategy

Due to the ingrained and covered nature of the phenomenon studied, there was a need to use an approach allowing explaining evasive objective social phenomena from a perspective which acknowledges their relative autonomy and their powers. The research has followed critical realism because it does align ontologically and epistemologically with that requirement. Critical realism proposes an intransitive, transfactual, and stratified social reality, and acknowledges the value-laden quality of knowledge derived about it, considered in terms of adequacy and epistemic gain (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002; Mingers, 2004; Sayer, 1997; Archer, 1998; Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998; Bhaskar, 2015).

This research is a critical realist, qualitative and processual inquiry allowing to unravel hidden causes and elaborate an explanation of the phenomenon studied as representing a moment in the historical trajectory of local societies that can highlight the past, the present and hint at the future (Boudreau & Davis, 2016; P. Dawson, 2014). It follows a retrodution structure of inference based on the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (Archer, 1995) to tell an *analytical history of the emergence* of the phenomenon studied. Analytical histories of emergence are also called "*analytical tales*" in this research to highlight the fallibility of the theory they harbour.

The operationalisation of this research project suggests the use of various methods for data collection, data analysis and interpretation of findings; triangulating methods in collecting and analysing data, and applying the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (Archer, 1995) as the critical realism causation framework of the research (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; Easton, 2010; Mingers, Mutch, & Willcocks, 2013). The methodology unites two phases: an empirical phase looking for demi-regularities through discourse analysis and a transcendental phase reaching into the past to identify events, objects and entities which tendencies and tendencies' transformations thereof are responsible for the observed discourse. The empirical phase presents an exploratory case research design (Yin, 2005) of the Twitter™ activities of the #Feesmustfall social movement, using abduction to construct a *realist model of social media discursive action* describing the emergence of discourse. The transcendental phase applies the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach to the *realist model of social media discursive action* using a transfactual argument (retrodution) to tell the *tale* of South African community members' social practice of social media discourse during social movements. The transcendental phase validates the possibility of a realist model of social media discursive action as a *middle-range* and *processual* explanation of the emergence of social media discourse during social movements.

## 1.7 Thesis plan

This thesis is organised into 10 chapters as suggested in Table 1.1:

**Table 1.1: Thesis organisation of chapters**

Chapter	Title	Description
1	<i>Introduction and Background</i>	Provides a background to the thesis, its motivation and importance, a description of its context, and the research problem engaged by the research.
2	<i>Research philosophical paradigm: A Critical Realism perspective</i>	This chapter introduces Critical Realism, the research paradigm followed in this research as it clarifies how its ontological and epistemological stances impact methodological approaches and theoretical choices in shaping the argument of the thesis.
3	<i>Literature review</i>	Provides an overview of current literature related to the research of South African community members social practice of social media discourse during social movements.
4	<i>Research Design and Methodology</i>	Presents the research strategy, planning and the methods deployed in this research. The aim is to suggest that the research follows relevant, rigorous and replicable standards in its design and execution.  Reports on the implementation of the planned methodology into the field. The aim is to provide evidence that rigorous standards were followed to increase the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the process and of the findings arrived at.
5	<i>Description of the case research context</i>	This chapter presents the Socio-cultural context surrounding the discourse of the #feesmustfall campaign purported over social media by South African students and supporters.
6	<i>The case of the social media discursive enactment of the #feesmustfall social movement</i>	This section presents an exploratory case research of social media discursive actions of South African community members during local social movements: #feesmustfall social movement.
7	<i>The analytical tale of the social media discursive enactment of #feesmustfall networked everyday resistance</i>	Deploys a transcendental and transfactual argument using the M/M approach to frame a sequence that explains South African community members' emergent usage of social media to enact online discursive resistance where <i>Freedom fighters</i> meet during social movements
8	<i>Discussion of findings</i>	Discusses theoretical and practical implications of the research's contribution.
9	<i>Conclusion</i>	Summarises research findings, outlines research contributions, explores potential limitations and makes suggestions for future research.
10	<i>Reference list and Appendices</i>	This chapter provides complete referral information about the authors and their publications cited in the thesis.  Also, detailed information relevant to the research is placed in the appendices to support or extend the argument in the main document.

This thesis continues with a presentation of Critical Realism, the philosophical paradigm adopted for the research. It is important to understand the research philosophical paradigm earlier because its assumptions influence research objectives, questions, literature review and methodology.

## Chapter II- Research philosophical paradigm: A Critical Realism perspective

This chapter introduces Critical Realism (CR), the research philosophical paradigm followed in this research. It clarifies how its ontological and epistemological stances impact methodological approaches and theoretical choices in shaping the argument of the thesis (Dobson, 2002). Critical realism is used in this study because it allows to uncover the generative mechanisms of social entities and technological objects which are usually empirically unobservable. These generative mechanisms are the causes of observable patterns or phenomena and phenomena behaviour.

The argument that is presented in this chapter emphasises: the philosophical assumptions (ontological and epistemological) constitutive of CR; main advantages that CR has over mainstream philosophical paradigms in the IS field; a suggestion of how these assumptions guide the research's treatment of the phenomenon scrutinized; and the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (M/M Approach) used in this research as a methodological apparel and a CR social theory able to retroductively explain the phenomenon studied.

### 2.1- Critical Realism (CR)

Critical Realism is a realist philosophy of science that was initiated by the British philosopher Roy Ram Bhaskar (Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 1978, 1993, 2015). Critical Realism offers the "possibility of naturalism" in investigating social reality (Bhaskar, 2015), in the sense that "*causal laws are the tendencies of generative mechanisms and structures, and natural necessities obtained throughout the cosmos; that the mode of inference of the various sciences essentially includes retroductive analogical, moving from manifest phenomena to an account of the generative mechanism that gives rise to them; and they ground their findings empirically by a range of methods whereby hypotheses in the non-experimental sciences can be confirmed and disconfirmed*" (Hartwig, 2015, p XXI-XXII).

Critical realism proposes an intransitive, transfactual, and stratified social reality and acknowledges the value-laden quality of knowledge derived about it, considered in terms of adequacy and epistemic gain (Danermark et al., 2002; Mingers, 2004; Sayer, 1997; Archer, 1998).

The aetiology of theories in Critical Realist social research follows the formula: social ontology → Explanatory methodology → Practical social theories (Archer, 1998). That governing formula suggests the existence of an autonomous, relatively enduring and causally efficacious reality which can be reached using an explanatory methodology to develop practical social theories.

#### 2.1.1 Critical Realism ontological assumptions

Critical Realism ontology is stratified and differentiated. It proposes to look at social reality through **empirical** (aspects of social reality that can be experienced or observed directly or indirectly), **actual** (aspects of social reality that occur but may not be experienced or observed) and **real** (structures and mechanisms which generate phenomena) strata as they allow reaching the real cause to the phenomenon experienced or observed (Zachariadis, Scott, & Barrett, 2013) (See table 2.1).

CR ontology is not to be confused with that of naturalism because of some limitations pertaining to the nature of society or social structures which unlike natural structures, do not exist independently of the activities they govern (activity dependence), of the agent's conceptions of their action (concept dependence), and maybe only relatively enduring over space and time (Spatiotemporal rhythmic and geo-historical process dependence) (Harvey, 2002). In that sense, society is both the condition and the outcome of human agency; and human agency is the efficacious cause of both the production and reproduction of society (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 1978, 1989, 1993, 2015; Danermark et al., 2002). Humans have *agency*. They are able to transform themselves and their networks of social relations: thus society and its structures (Archer, 1995, 2000, 2007b; Bhaskar, 1989).

As an illustration on ontological grounds, the phenomenon investigated in this research concerns a change in South African community members' agency as they are involved in using social media during social movements. It suggests an *actual* event where *real* and pre-existing socio-cultural entities, agency, and social media affordances interact to generate the discourse observed on social media. In this case, *real* objects and entities with various *causal powers* interact. These are South African post-colonial socio-cultural and agential emergent properties, and social media affordances. Such a meeting is an *event* belonging to the domain of the *actual*. It is accountable in the intermingling of post-colonial socio-cultural systems, institutions, roles and individual positions, flowing into rising personal identities of young Africans having to contend with social media affordances. New identities would then flow towards the emergence of a new social actor with unprecedented social and political powers: an influential South African actor noticeable by the online discourse it is practising.

**Table 2.1: CR ontological domains and their relevant objects of knowledge (Source: Bhaskar, 2008)**

	Domain of Real	Domain of Actual	Domain of Empirical
Experience	✓	✓	✓
Events	✓	✓	
Structures and Mechanism	✓		

### 2.1.2 Objects of the domain of the real

CR domain of the real is classified into four different types of entities: materially real, ideally real, artifactually real, and socially real entities (Fleetwood, 2005). This section introduces the notions of structures, emergent properties of relationship, causal/generative mechanisms and technology affordance as the mains entities and objects of the domain of the real which this research will be concerned with. These notions refer to a conception of reality according to CR and the M/M approach.

#### a) **Structures**

Giddens (1984) defines social structures as “*rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction*”, and that they only exist as memory traces which can be reified by human agency. Critical realism challenges that understanding of social structures because it confuses related objects (rules and resources) with the structures emerging from social relationships involving them. It conflates *structure* with *agency* (central conflation) and it struggles to accommodate social change

(Archer, 2003). Critical realism offers a different definition which considers social structures as *relational emergent properties* bound to material resources and rules and enjoying the qualities of relative endurance and autonomy (Archer, 1995). They are equipped with internally and necessarily related to other relational emergent properties and generative mechanisms possessing tendencies, liabilities and causal powers (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 1993). Structures are described as sets of internally and necessarily related objects or practices constituting real entities to investigate in particular contexts (Bhaskar, 1993, 2008a, 2015; Danermark et al., 2002).

### **b) *Emerging properties of relationships***

Archer (1995) developed the notion of emerging properties of relationships as an ideally and socially real set of entities. She suggested that social reality is constituted by spatially situated and relatively enduring emergent properties of relationships understood as objects, agential, social and cultural structures; and relevant generative mechanism. They possess causally efficacious tendencies or causal powers which activation produce *events* (Archer, 1995, 1998; Mingers et al., 2013). These emergent properties of relationships come in different levels of importance or orders ranging from the position in life at birth (1<sup>st</sup> order), through the occupation of social roles (2<sup>nd</sup> order) into social institutions and systems (3<sup>rd</sup> order) (Archer, 1995) (also see section 3.9.4). These orders interpenetrate each other and get in the way of people actions (structural conditioning).

### **c) *Causal or generative mechanisms***

The expressions *causal mechanism* and *generative mechanism* are used interchangeably in this research. They are understood to refer to the same notion of objective conditioning of phenomena. Social mechanisms represent an instantiation of these notions in a social setting.

*Causal mechanisms* were not clearly defined by CR main promoters using various terms including entities, structures, things, mechanisms and powers to refer to the same *stuff* (Mingers, 2011). Bhaskar (2008, p42) called them "*the way of acting of a thing*". Many authors in the social science literature refer to causal mechanisms as generative mechanisms; where they are understood as irreducible and hierarchically structured causal notions identifiable from the phenomenon that they produce (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Volkoff & Strong, 2013). For the sake of clarity, mechanisms will be parts of a structure with actualised or activated causal powers (Collier, 1994). Non-activated causal powers are called "*liabilities*". These notions are important because, when mechanisms interact, they produce effects or outcomes (new mechanisms or structures) that are emergent and are not inherent to any of their predecessors. Causal mechanisms are used to develop mid-range explanatory theories of specific events or fallible accounts of the reasons behind the observed effect (See section 3.10.1 on theorisation). Generative mechanisms may not be observed; but they can be inferred through a combination of empirical exploration and theory construction (Abduction and retroduction) (Ayim, 1974; Saether, 1998; Mingers et al., 2013; Zachariadis et al., 2013). As a consequence, the selection of a generative mechanism with the greater explanatory power requires CR researchers to use *judgmental rationality* (Bhaskar, 2008a).

*Social mechanisms* refer to analytical constructs or systems of causal relationships between parts of a social system which fulfil social processes within specific conditions (Hedström & Swedberg, 1996, 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Mayntz, 2004). Social mechanisms are not observable but are understood to generate observable social phenomena. Social mechanisms may be the result of human agency, social structure tendencies and other generative mechanisms. Social mechanisms have explanatory powers and are expected to be constitutive parts of explanatory middle-range theories in social science (Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Mayntz, 2004). This research uses social mechanisms underpinning the concepts of ideology, power and the relationships between these phenomena in its attempts to explain their effects on South African community members discourse over social media (See sections 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5b, 5.1, 5.2, 6.3.4, 6.6.3b and 6.7.1).

Hedström & Swedberg (1998) classify social mechanisms into three interrelated types: situational mechanisms (macro-micro operation- from a system to an individual actor's desires and beliefs); action-formation mechanisms (micro-micro operation – individual choice and actions influenced by one's belief and opportunities); and transformational mechanisms (micro-macro operation – collective individual action generate macro-level outcome). This classification allows for the analysis of the interaction of mechanisms across operational levels.

#### **d) *Technology affordances as Technology emergent properties (TEP)***

*Technology affordances* can be understood as causal mechanisms of a technological artefact like social media (Volkoff & Strong, 2013). They represent relational emergent properties which internal and necessary relations are based on the natural properties of material components, objective emergent properties resulting from the configuration of component interactions and socio-cultural emergent properties resulting from developer intentions and user innovation. Such an understanding is compatible with critical realism (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 1978, 1998, 1998, 2008a, 2015) and calls for a notion of Technology Emergent Properties (TEP) to be added to the M/M approach (See section 8.2.3 for a discussion).

#### **2.1.3 Causal powers, tendencies and liabilities**

A causal power is what an entity can perform by virtue of its intrinsic design in the *transfactual* transfer of energy, information, or matter to other entities to realize events. It is understood as a causally efficacious tendency of a real object (Archer, 1995, 1998; Mingers et al., 2013). Causal powers durably affect entities characteristics and propensities until counteracted by the powers of other mechanisms. Hartwig (2008, pXVII) has described a causal power as “*potentialities and liabilities in virtue of their intrinsic structures (essential natures), which may or may not be exercised, and when exercised may or may not be manifest in a particular outcome, hence may be exercised unactualized and/or unmanifested to people*”.

#### **2.1.4 Events**

Events refer to the effects that mechanisms generate when they interact. Events can be described by some factors or patterns. Events can fade or be exacerbated as a result of subjugation or conjunction of supporting underlining generative mechanisms (Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012); Events are noticed

through abstraction or through perception and experience (result of Positivist and Interpretivist inquiries), opening a way to retroductively glimpse responsible generative mechanism (Henfridsson & Bygstad, 2013; Mingers et al., 2013). An event can also be the result of the interaction of other events. In the case of this research, the main event inquired about is the emergent usage of social media in social movements in sub-Saharan Africa that is existing from the interaction of a constellation of empirically unobservable generative mechanisms.

### **2.1.5 Experience**

Experiences are located in the empirical domain. Experiences refer to those events which humans can observe through their senses or through the use of relevant technological means (Bhaskar, 2008a). However, this is not easy to achieve. Events are located in the domain of the actual and will only be perceived if they leave traces in the domain of the empirical; these traces are what we can perceive and experience, not the actual event. Our usual means of observation, senses and other technological artefacts present important limitations making our knowledge of the domain of the actual fallible.

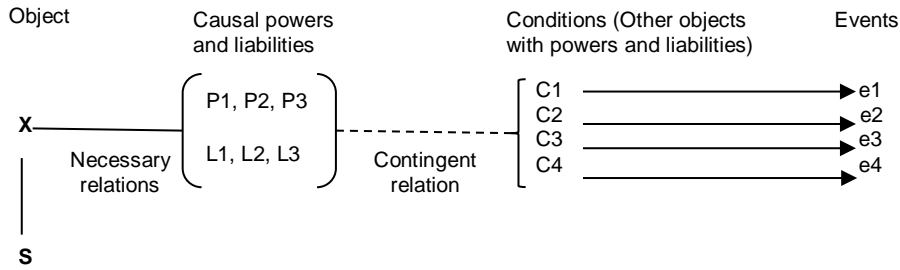
Experiences have been the hallmark of positivist and interpretivist scientific enterprises in attempting to discover the laws of nature or those of society. CR research goes beyond experience, seeking the mechanisms animating nature and society (Danermark et al., 2002). The experience of the emergent usage of social media in social movements in sub-Saharan Africa that can be observed when community members interact with the technology for their online activity is the doorway towards the underlying mechanisms fuelling it.

### **2.1.6 Causal explanation and the relationship between Structures, mechanism and events**

A Critical Realist mechanistic causal explanation is an elicited hypothesis through judgemental rationality that links an object of the domain of the real by natural necessity to its structures and mechanisms endowed with actualised powers or tendencies. These interactions of tendencies produce the observed event by a link of external contingency (Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2008a).

Causal explanation in CR is based on the identification of generative mechanisms responsible for the rise of observed events. Since entities and objects of the domain of the real are not directly observable, the CR researcher must make use of theory-led abstraction to isolate an aspect of what would have caused the concrete event.

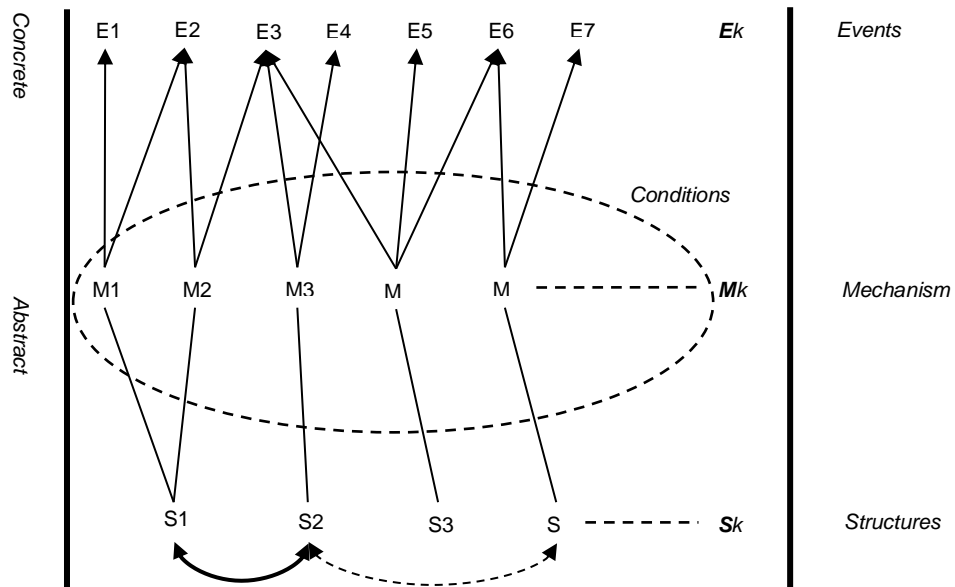
The relationships between entities, objects, structures, mechanisms and events constitute the cement for these blocks of explanatory theory. Sayer (1992) devised a causal explanatory model that suggests that an object (X) (e.g.: Social media) constituted by a structure (S) (e.g.: Convergence culture) endowed with causal powers (P) (e.g.: social networking) and liabilities (L) (e.g.: Western cultural values and sociality), interacts with other surrounding objects with powers and liabilities constituting the conditions of its expression, and produce events (E) (e.g.: Lowering of opportunity cost of achieving particular aims or interests) (See figure 2.1).



Object X having a structure S (e.g.: the unit of observation) ----- Necessarily possessing causal powers ( $p$ ) and liabilities ( $l$ ) ----- Under specific condition ( $c$ ) ----- C1 not activated, hence producing no change  $e1$ , C2 produces change of type  $e2$ , C3 produces change of type  $e3$ , etc

**Figure 2.1: Structure of causal explanation (Sayer, 1992, p.109)**

In concrete, events are presented as an outcome of the work of the powers of generative mechanisms. But since a mechanism needs activation in order to perform, their outcome is always a result of interaction whether *necessary* or *contingent* with other mechanisms and structures (Danermark et al., 2002). Relations between entities, objects, structures and mechanisms, and their powers and liabilities are based on *natural necessity*; while their relations with their environment are *contingent*. As a result, a causal mechanism necessarily belonging to a particular structure will be noticeable from events generated by its *contingent* interaction with its conditioning environment (other mechanisms and structures) (See Figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.2: Relation between Structures, Mechanisms and events (Danermark et al. (2002, p.58))**

### 2.1.7 Emergence in Critical realism

Emergence in CR is a process by which a new and distinct object, entity, structure, mechanism and event is generated out of the interaction of or just out of the pre-existing material from which they

could have neither be induced nor deduced (Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2008b, p. 45). Bhaskar (2008a) insists that emergence speaks of an *irreducible novelty; a quantum leap; matter as creative, as autopoietic*. The concept stems from the idea that the sum of the parts is not equal to the whole; where the whole is an entity completely distinct from its predecessors (Elder-Vass, 2005). The concept of emergence as understood here can be illustrated in natural science where Hydrogen and Oxygen combine to produce water which is neither of them and possesses very different properties from those they do possess. In realist social science, a social network which emerges from the social interaction of social actors is neither speaking nor greeting or empathy or respect or trust or reciprocity; but the result of the collision between all of these. The emergent social network influences the lives of the members of the network by redistributing resources and opportunities. An emergent entity or object has a kind of *life* of its own, with unique properties.

### **2.1.8 Dialectical Critical Realism and the logic of absence qua real negation**

The axiology of CR research resides in its awareness of value, its emancipatory goal and its problem-solving mindset. CR aims at *freedom*, which is described as the product of absence or real negativity (Bhaskar, 2008b). The resolution of this research is based on the critical realist dialectics of real negation or absence of the presence of fallacies (a determinate, indeterminate, fuzzy, duplicitous and a mélange of other genres) (Bhaskar, 2008b). Critical realist dialectics “*depend upon the positive identification and transformative elimination of absences*” (Bhaskar, 2008b, p40).

*“Absenting absences, which act as constraints on wants, needs or (more generally) well-being, is essential to dialectics interpreted as the logic of freedom. P38*

*Real negation is most simply first considered as the presence in some more or less determinate region of space-time of an absence at some specific level or context of being of some more or less determinate entity, thing, power, event, aspect or relation, etc. (Bhaskar, 2008b, p. 35)*

*The result of logical contradiction is, as I have noted, axiological indeterminacy, lack of dialectical universalizability and the absence of grounds for rational autonomy of action. Because many bases of criticism can be reduced to contradiction, it is important to notice that there are others which cannot, such as (1) incompleteness (simple absence), (2) irrelevance (absence of a connection), (3) vicious infinite regress (absence of nonhomologous resolution) and (4) reductio ad absurdum (which may be defined as the absence of coherence). P74”*

Bhaskar (2008b) argues that it is possible to refer to a non-being which can be understood as “that which is not, because it is not observed or observable” for its ontological priority upon being which could be understood as “that which is observed or observable”.

*For it is my intention to maintain in this section (1) that we can refer to non-being, (2) that non-being exists, and that (3) not only must it be conceded that non-being has ontological priority over being within zero-level being, (4) but, further, non-being has ontological priority over being. p36*

*Real negation* is performed by absenting, by transformation and/or distancing of a determinate or indeterminate. For example, social structures are basically absent, yet their presence is strongly felt; hence their absence must be absented for the contradiction displayed in their effects to be coherent.

*In general, one can resolve the problem of the individuation and articulation of an emergent entity and its various aspects only by reference to the explanatory power of the theory which a particular découpage permits. This, in turn, will depend to a degree upon our explanatory purposes. However, this does not subjectivise explanation in science (or everyday existence), for what I will call the 'reality principle' (invoking its Freudian ancestry) imposes its own stratification on science and lay life. Dialectical critical realism sees totalities within totalities (but studded with blocks, partitions and distance) recursively. P51*

Bhaskar (2008b, p414) established a theorem of negation as “*Real negation ≥ transformative negation ≥ radical negation ≥ linear negation*”. This thesis is resolved by means of a dialectical process of transformative negation or absence explaining the emergence of #feesmustfall social media discourse as an attempt to alter the alterity of the unresolved predicaments of the post-apartheid condition.

## **2.2 Critical Realism epistemological assumptions and methodology**

CR subscribes to epistemic relativity bound by judgemental rationality that subjectively selects a hypothesis on the basis of its causal efficacy (Archer, 1995; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2008a; Danermark et al., 2002; Mingers et al., 2013). CR epistemology also subscribes to the general theory of Alethic modality that suggests the existence of a plurality of truths allowing to uncover laws governing real social objects and entities (Bhaskar, 1993). CR logic of discovery distinctively uses abduction and retroduction to make inferences to better explanations (Bertilsson, 2004; Danermark et al., 2002; Schurz, 2008).

### **2.2.1 Epistemic relativity**

Epistemic relativity speaks to Critical Realism (CR) value awareness in the production of knowledge while asserting of the existence of real and autonomous knowledge belonging to the real object. CR recognises a transitive (TD) and an intransitive (ID) dimension of knowledge (Archer et al., 1998; Collier, 1994). The transitive dimension (TD) of CR epistemology refers to human knowledge about reality (transitive objects of knowledge). The transitive dimension includes the established *antecedent* facts and theories, paradigms and models, methods and techniques of inquiry available to a particular scientific school of thought and inquiry, while the intransitive dimension refers to real objects of knowledge or objects which workings are autonomous from the knowledge derived about them (Bhaskar, 2008a)

### **2.2.2 Judgemental rationality and thought experiments**

Critical realism analysis through retroduction allows postulating natural or real mechanisms or structures which workings, or tendencies or causal powers are objectively based on natural necessities between causes and their effects (Bhaskar, 1978; Harre & Madden, 1998). The practice of abduction and retroduction require imagination and creativity in generating logical and objective hypotheses based on natural necessities (judgemental rationality) which will be tested using thought experiments meant at challenging their robustness (Spens & Kovács, 2006).

### 2.2.3 Critical realism mode of inference: Abduction

Critical realism utilises abduction as a thought experiment mechanism for abstraction, re-conceptualisation and theoretical re-description (Danermark et al., 2002). This mode of inference implies to move from empirical observation of data to an abstracted emerging theoretical framing of the phenomenon reconceptualised using constructs and propositions of extant theories; followed by an iterative process using thought experiments on empirical observation to test and mend the candidate theory to match the reality studied (Beirlaen & Aliseda, 2014; Bertilsson, 2004; Danermark et al., 2002; Dubois & Gadde, 2002, 2014; Magnani, 2004; Schurz, 2008; Spens & Kovács, 2006). That “theory matching” or “systematic combining” process exploits the creativity and the imagination of the researcher, who uses judgemental rationality in determining the ability of a particular explanation to sustain the test of facts (Danermark et al., 2002; Dubois & Gadde, 2002, 2014; Spens & Kovács, 2006).

### 2.2.4 Critical realism mode of inference: Retrodution

Critical realism foremost approach to inference is retrodution. Retrodution is a transfactual and transcendental argument or an argument that goes retrospectively beyond facts in order to unveil how a real entity or object would be constituted and how such an entity or object would have behaved for the observed phenomenon to have occurred (Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 1993; Danermark et al., 2002).

Retrodution is thus a mode of logical inference looking at hypothesising causal explanation of the phenomenon empirically observed (Ayim, 1974; Saether, 1998). The derivation of knowledge about reality is a thought process which involves imagination, informed guesses and creativity (Danermark et al., 2002). As a consequence, an inference is constructed from conjecturing over empirical evidence, in order to explicitly identify actual events and underlying causal or generative mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2002; Downward & Mearman, 2006; Mingers et al., 2013; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012; Zachariadis et al., 2013).

Critical realism retrodution is usually linked to an abductive approach to develop more reliable hypotheses of the workings of the reality of social phenomena. Such a process of conjecturing is a move from the concrete event

(experienced or observed) to the abstracted event and its generative mechanisms, and back (Danermark et al., 2002). The operation is to use judgemental rationality during thought experiments strategies (statistics, scenarios analysis, etc.).

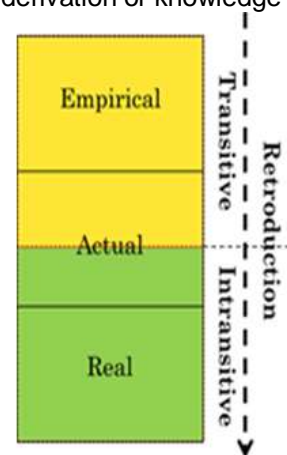


Figure 2.3: Simplistic view of Retrodution in CR ontological strata

## 2.3 Why critical realism and not another philosophical paradigm

Information systems research has been mostly argued around positivist and interpretivist or constructivist philosophical assumptions (Mingers, 2004; Mingers et al., 2013; Njihia & Merali, 2013; Ononiwu, 2015). These assumptions have been immanently criticised for fostering epistemic fallacy

and anthropocentrism with their mistreatment of reality as the categories derived from it or as the categories imposed upon it (Archer, 1998; Bhaskar, 1978) (see Table 2.2). Also, these modes of thinking are not able to offer and validate explanations linking abstract and unobservable causes with their empirical effects (Beirlaen & Aliseda, 2014; Bertilsson, 2004; Bhaskar, 2008b). Table 2.2 compares philosophical traditions in IS in order to highlight the difference and the benefits of using critical realism. As suggested in that table, Critical Realism stands as a middle ground fostering causal explanation of phenomena, acknowledging an objective but stratified reality, while promoting methodological pluralism, as well as value awareness in the practice of research.

Critical realism offers an opportunity for more creativity in social research and the opportunity to generate theories and hypotheses befitting or getting closer to an alethic truth about reality (Bhaskar, 1993, 2015; Njihia, 2011); which is expected to be the aim of science. The philosophy acts as an under-labourer in clarifying theories on ontological grounds. Further, with regard to the analysis of discourse in this study, CR allows considering discourse as rising from an extra-discursive conditioning stratum which it aims to transform (Fairclough, 2012; Sims-Schouten, Riley, & Willig, 2007).

**Table 2.2: Philosophical paradigmatic stances in Information Systems (IS) field (Ononiwu, 2015)**

Philosophical traditions in IS research	Positivism	Critical Realism	Interpretivism/ Constructivism
Aim of inquiry	Descriptions/Predictions	Causal explanations	Understanding
Finality of science	Identify universal laws from the observation of actual events	Provide adequate causal explanations (alethic truth) of the workings of reality, by connecting empirical events to their real causes	Meaning making that connects experienced phenomena to their actual event
Ontological assumptions about social Reality	Naïve realism Reality is apprehensible	Reality is transcendental, stratified and transfactual and knowledge about it is fallible.	Multiple and often contradictory realities that are equally valid accounts of the same phenomenon.
Epistemological assumptions about social Reality	Objective; remain emotionally detached with the object of research and empirically test stated hypotheses	Epistemic relativity bound by judgemental rationality; Subjectivist co-creation of meanings that is fallible to construe reality based on efficacy.	Epistemic relativity; subjectivist co-creation of valid multiple meanings as reality
Methodological	Experimentation, survey, and falsification of hypotheses mainly by quantitative methods and deductive inference	Methodological pluralism (quantitative and qualitative methods with triangulation) to exhume generative mechanisms  Retroductive inference.	Hermeneutical / Dialectical. Challenging to differentiated causes and effects  Inductive reasoning
Axiology	Research is value free	Research is value aware, emancipatory and fostering a problem-solving mindset	Research is value bound
General social theory	Structuralism	Morphogenetic approach	Structuration theory

## 2.4 Some critique of Critical realism

A philosophical or social science discussion of critical realism is not within the scope of this project. While acknowledging the existence of other realist philosophical orientations including Agential Realism, and other strands of critical realism founded in America in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (with Roy Wood Sellars, George Santayana and Arthur Lovejoy as proponent commentators); or that of the Canadian philosopher Bernard Lonergan, the research has purposely chosen Roy Bhaskar's version. The reason is that Bhaskar's critical realism reflects an objective, stratified, dynamic, and autopoietic reality enabling researchers to measure and describe the eluding phenomenon of interest in this research. As a consequence, this thesis is argued in accordance with Bhaskar's critical realist philosophy of social science (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998; Bhaskar, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2015) as research philosophical paradigm shaping its design and implementation.

As Critical Realism (CR) was becoming an important philosophical paradigm in IS research and other social sciences, many authors found various difficulties with its ontological and epistemological stances. Some authors suggested that CR was creating more confusion with its unclear dualist ontology both relativist and positivist, that was providing antinomies, incompatibilities and more assumptions than actual evidence of the existence of its intransitive domain of the structure of society (King, 1999; Cruickshank, 2004; Cruickshank, 2010; Hammersley, 2009).

These critics stem from philosophical bias holding concepts about reality as reality or rejecting the existence of enduring and causally efficacious entities and objects.

## 2.5 Critical realism implication for theory

This research is a qualitative, processual and retroductive inquiry developing a critical realist case. Critical realism epistemology bears the belief that there is a perceivable reality from which a transitive dimension of knowledge (TD) is obtained and a relatively enduring, autonomous and causally efficacious reality in which an intransitive dimension of knowledge (ID) independent from human knowledge, but which can be uncovered resides (Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2008a; Mingers et al., 2013). It also recognises that knowledge creation is a social activity relying on human abilities; meaning that human beings can only know what they can perceive and what their minds are able to construct (Bhaskar, 2008b, 2008a; Danermark et al., 2002).

Danermark et al (2002, p117) outline 5 starting points concerning the relationship between theory and observation/data in critical realism suggesting that:

1. *We can never understand, analyse or categorize reality without using a theoretical language of concepts.*
2. *These concepts are constantly being developed.*
3. *The development of concepts presupposes an (intransitive) reality independent of these concepts.*
4. *The relation between theories/theoretical concepts and the properties or objects the concepts are referring to is not unambiguous and simple; nor is it arbitrary. All theoretical descriptions are fallible, but not equally fallible.*
5. *Theories and theoretical concepts are developed in relation to the experiences we obtain when we use them to understand reality.* (Danermark et al., 2002, p117)

As a result, theories and understandings from empirical studies from positivists, interpretivist or critical theorist philosophical paradigms could be taken up and utilized by the critical realist researcher

investigating the empirical and actual domains before transcendently delving into the real for further refinement (Danermark et al., 2002; Mingers et al., 2013). CR transcendental deepening or 'underlabouring' of theories is its hallmark (Archer et al., 1998). CR aims at devising the best possible explanation (inference to the best explanation - IBE) of reality through active engagement with fallible or falsifiable theories about it (A. J. Fletcher, 2016).

## 2.6 Critical realism approach to theoretical explanation

One of the main aims of critical realism in social science is to generate theories by improving theoretical contributions as an "*under-labourer*" or by bringing about completely new theories (Danermark et al., 2002; Mingers et al., 2013). Bhaskar (2015) suggested the DREI(C) (Description, Retrodution, Elimination, Identification and correction) framework in order to approach theoretical explanation (Bhaskar, 2015); but he did not provide much guidance as to how to implement it.

That led to researchers devising frameworks which are more practical and are based on the DREI(C). The most popular of these Critical Realism approaches to theoretical explanation include Pawson and Tilley (2004) "realistic evaluation", Danermark et al. (2002) "explanatory framework" and Archer (1995) "Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach".

### 2.6.1 Realistic evaluation

Realistic evaluation is a Critical Realist framework and methodological approach in evaluation studies. It suggests devising for every instance of evaluation a prior theory based on *Mechanism* (generative mechanisms or causes of observed patterns), *Context* (conditions within which the phenomenon is being observed) and *Outcomes* (Observable effect or result of the work of underlying mechanisms) (Pawson & Tilley, 2004).

### 2.6.2 Explanatory framework

Danermark et al (2002) revisited the DREI(C) framework for the social science. They provided a simplified avenue to implementing the DREI(C) with their Explanatory Framework (EF). The EF provide guidance about implementing the DREI(C) in 6 steps. It starts with a move from *concrete knowledge* from a *description* of the phenomenon of interest to *abstract knowledge* (Step1). Such *abstract knowledge* is resulting from *analytical resolution* (identification of components), *abduction/theoretical redescription* (describing the phenomenon from existing theories, models and frameworks concepts), *retrodution* as a transfactual argument compares the product of the argument with existing theories (Steps 2,3,4 and 5). *Abstract knowledge* is then brought back to *concrete knowledge* where elicited theoretical explanation is reconstituted as a reflexion of the phenomenon observed within its particular context (concretisation and contextualisation) (Danermark et al, 2002, pp 109-111) (see Figure 2.4).

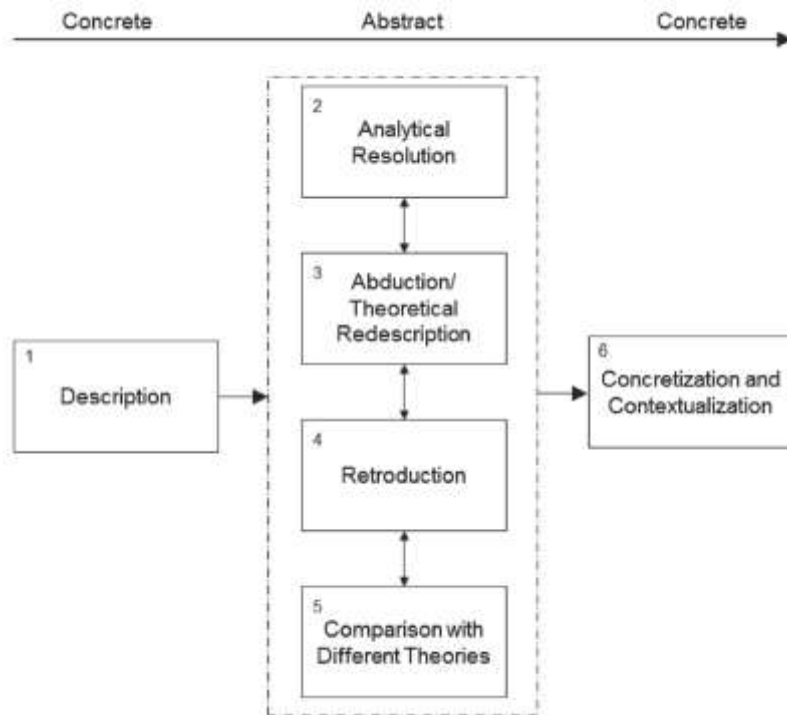


Figure 2.4: Explanatory framework (Danermark et al, 2002)

### 2.6.3 Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (M/M approach)

The Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (M/M approach) is a realist social theory. It uses *spatiotemporal rhythmic* conceived as *space-time causal powers* and implying a processual trajectory for the transformation of emergent properties of relationships. It suggests that an account of transformation in space and time, follows a rhythmic which provides explanatory powers to the succession of events accounted for as an emergent momentum or “*just the spatiotemporal efficacy of the process*”. Bhaskar (2008b) explains:

*“Emergence entails both stratification and change. So far, I have concentrated on emergent entities and causal powers. But if, as I have already argued, all changes are spatiotemporal, and space-time is a relational property of the meshwork of material beings, this opens up the phenomena of **emergent spatiotemporalities**. In either event, they establish new ‘rhythmics’, where a rhythmic is just the spatiotemporal efficacy of the process.*

*If it is non-substantial, then the causal rhythmic of a process must, and even if it is substantial it may, be reckoned to be a sui generis causal power of space-time itself. Space-time thus takes on, potentially, a fivefold character as: (a) a reference grid, (b) a measure, (c) a set of prima facie mutual exclusion relations, (d) a potentially emergent property, perhaps with causal powers of its own, and (e) a generally entropic process.” (Bhaskar, 2008b, p. 49)*

The Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach is a theorisation of emergent spatiotemporality. It examines a *transformative negation* within a spatiotemporal rhythmic with its morphogenetic cycle accounting of structural spatiotemporal stratification and change. It suggests the existence of a causally efficacious cyclical tendency in the process of transformation of socio-cultural emergent properties of relationship.

The explanatory format of the M/M approach provides analytical histories of emergence (Archer, 1995 p327). The M/M approach serves an analytical history of emergence linking phase I (T1 to T2 -

structural conditioning) and phase II (T2 to T3 – Socio-cultural interaction) of the cycle with a distribution of vested interest that confronts Agents with situational logics necessary for their attainment; then linking phase II (T2 to T3) to phase III (T3 to T4 - structural elaboration) mechanisms of exchange transactions and power relations producing either reciprocity or control of one group over the other (Archer, 2000). These phases describe the establishment of conditions which allowed for an observed phenomenon to rise. They present the actions of social actors as the result of the interaction of anterior social structures tendencies with personal identities as they progress towards the realisation of their aspirations.

M/M approach uses description to present the actions of social actors; retroduction in it seeking of the triggering entities and entities interactions; elimination, identification and correction in determining the most realistic narrative of the observed phenomenon suggesting its causes. It is expected to be most useful in interrogating social practice of discourse stemming from the interaction of socio-cultural conditioning, social media affordances and individual agency of South African community members during contemporaneous social movements.

This research has elected to use the M/M approach for its emphasis on the dynamism of social reality as the condition and the product of social activities, and its ability to be used as an explanatory theory of social change. The M/M approach is the realist social theory underpinning this research.

The thesis continues with a review of the literature situating the research as a transdisciplinary inquiry across Information Systems, media and communication studies, and social science research, with a strong connection to e-Participation<sup>2</sup> research, providing an understanding of main concepts, and devising a conceptual framework.

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<sup>2</sup> E-Participation: *“efforts to broaden and deepen political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their elected representatives and governments, using ICTs”.*

## Chapter III: Literature review

The aim of this research is to explain, from a Critical Realist point of view, South African community members' emerging usage of social media (social practice of discourse over social media as a "space of transformative negation") during social movements by providing a contextualised social history of their *online discursive enactment of everyday resistance*. The research is concerned with the change or not in the production and reception of meaning by community members as they use social media to carry messages of resistance to a social hegemon.

As a Critical realist review, this appraisal of the literature aims at generating a conceptual framework that will guide the derivation of findings through abduction and retroduction. The argumentative strategy for such a review suggests developing an *a priori* theoretical representation of the phenomenon based on the research topic and main question; it describes the methodology for gathering the literature in line with the themes from research topic and questions; it synthesises concepts and categories relevant to the phenomenon under research; and finally it establishes theoretical coherence and suggests ways for re-contextualisation, towards constructing an *a priori* theory (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014; Ononiwu, 2015; Rowe, 2014). The theoretical framework is obtained from synthesising themes or concepts and theoretical contributions to the emergent usage of social media during South African social movements.

This research is a transdisciplinary inquiry and cut across social and political science, communication and media studies, computer-mediated communication and information systems research. The chapter continues with a presentation of the literature review method deployed.

### 3.1 Literature review method

This review of the literature was realised following a concept-centric and systematic approach to finding articles and to structuring the appraisal (Okoli & Schabram, 2010; Webster & Watson, 2002; Rowe, 2014; Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015). The review involved the use of themes, concepts and keywords underpinning research problem and questions (see section 3 and 4) (Rowe, 2014). Also, the usual rules of peer-reviewed, most influential (seminal), most cited, and most recent articles were applied according to declarations from the publication websites; snowballing from a pattern of reference of specific titles by a set of papers and Google scholar citation system.

For this review, the main themes considered were: Social movement and collective identity, Agency of South Africa community members, Social and political participation, social media in the convergence culture, usage of social media during social movements, theories of the usage of social media in social movements, and research conceptual model. These themes were selected in relation to keywords from the research problem, questions and objectives (see Table 1.2), in order to frame out South African community members' emergent usage of social media during social movements.

The chapter continues with a discussion of relevant work on social practice, collective identity and Agency in SSA.

## 3.2 The social practice of social media discourse

Social media usage can be understood as a social practice of communication. This research is concerned with South African community members emergent discourse on social media during social movements. This section discusses the social practice of social media discourse as an entity or structure and as a performance.

### 3.2.1 Social practice

Reckwitz (2002, p 249) offers a definition of Practice (*Praktik* in German) as a routinized type of behaviour consisting of several interconnected elements including “*forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge*”. This immediately brings to mind Bourdieu’s concept of *Habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977). *Habitus* is suggested to be the:

*“Durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus.”*  
(Bourdieu, 1977, p 78)

That definition of *Habitus* makes it look like a social or a cultural structure in critical realism terms (See section 2.1.2 a)). However, Critical realism challenges the concept of *Habitus* for its downplaying of agency, for not accommodating analytical dualism (central conflation) and for its inability to accommodate social change through reflexivity (Decoteau, 2016b). Authors have tried to reconcile *Habitus* and *reflexivity* without reaching a solid agreement (Archer, 2010b; Decoteau, 2016b; Fleetwood, 2008; Sayer, 2009). Yet, Elder-Vass (2011) maintains that discourse has causal powers and would represent a category of Socio-cultural structural formation in a critical realist sense.

Kuijer (2014) suggests considering practice as both an entity (structure) and a performance (activity). As an entity, practice would be emergent from internal and necessary relation between a set of **material resources** deployed in the activity, **meaning** or socially shared ideas and concepts associated with the activity and which aligns it in spatiotemporal sense to local Socio-cultural conditioning, and **competences** as bodily and mental routines to apply in the exercise of a particular activity (Blue, Shove, Carmona, & Kelly, 2016; Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012). The internal and necessary relation of these elements, in addition to the relative endurance and autonomy of such amalgamate allows giving it the status of structure (Bhaskar, 1993, 2008a, 2015; Danermark et al., 2002). In accordance, Archer (2010) suggested that practice as a structure of the practical order emerges from a subject’s compliance to an object. As performance, practice would then represent a set of activities initiated and performed by an actor complying with the ordinances of the underlining structure defining the activity.

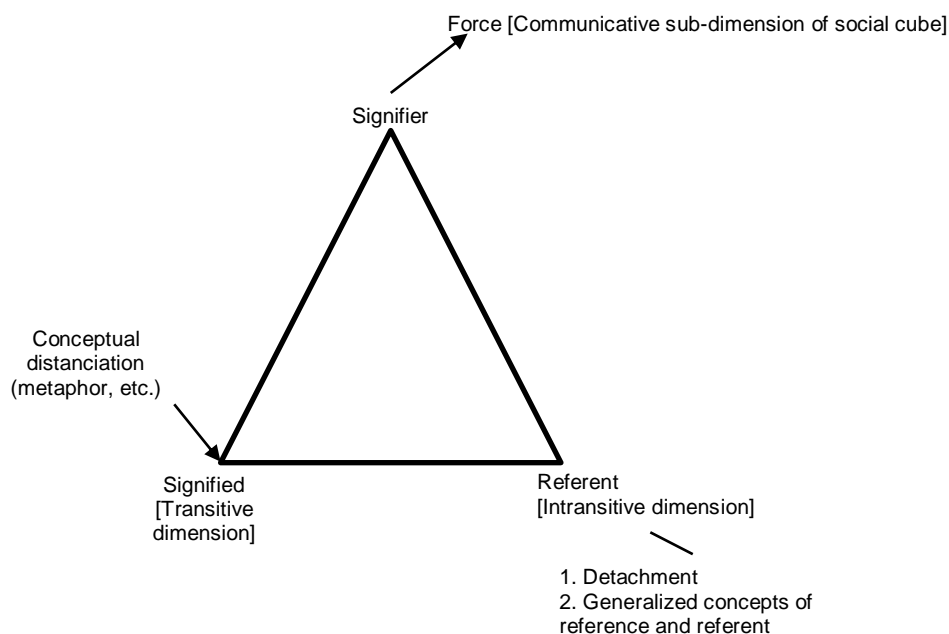
This research considers social practice as a socio-cultural emergent property of relationship rising from the internal and necessary relations of material resources, competence and meaning within the spatiotemporal confines of a particular community; and as a routinized behaviour or activity initiated and performed by a South African actor (Blue et al., 2016; Shove et al., 2012).

### 3.2.2 Meaning making as signification and asignification

Discourse as practice is understood to mediate meaning making through mechanisms of signification and asignification which imprint or un-imprint Socio-cultural influences upon the agential impetus to mean using existing semantic patterns. Signification is an observer construal while asignification is an object or entity's real signalling. These semantic patterns present syntagmatic and paradigmatic configurations elicited by authors and their audiences in their use of language. As such meaning making can be understood as an exercise of syntagmatic ordering of paradigmatic content.

#### a) *Signification*

Signification is understood in this research as a semiotic concept and a generative mechanism of meaning making describing the relationship between the signifier (Representamen) and the signified (Interpretant) parts of a sign on behalf of a referential object (De Saussure, 2006; Mingers & Willcocks, 2014; Peirce, 1878). Signifier, signified and referent form the semiotic triangle by which meaning is construed (Bhaskar, 2008b, p. 209) (See figure 3)



**Figure 3.1: The semiotic triangle (Bhaskar, 2008b, p209)**

Bhaskar (2008b) understanding of semiotics aligns with Peircean understanding. In peircean semiotics, representamen or signifiers can be categorised as icon (directly or immediately resembling the object), index (implied logical association with an object) or symbol (convention of relation to an object) based on how a sign can be related to an object. Mingers and Willcocks (2014) suggested a similar semiotic framework for information systems that integrates personal world (of belief, values and motivations), with a Socio-cultural world (of norms, practices and roles) and a material world (of physical structures and technology) related by sociation, sociomateriality and embodiment through processes of semiosis.

These definitions suggest that meaning will be generated with the use of paraphrases or quotes, metaphorical and metonymical statements, as well as symbolic statements referring to existing semantic patterns in main stream discourses (reproduction) or modified semantic patterns with regards to mainstream discourse (production or transformation or change) (Ayyaz, 2017; Fairclough, 2012). These icons, indexes and symbols will be read in reference to elements from personal, Socio-cultural and material worlds as expressed in the text of Twitter™ posts.

Signification is used in this research to describe the deployment of meaning on behalf of the generative mechanism or emergent property of relationship of the practice of discourse which efficaciously enables or constrains meaning making over social media.

### **b) *Asignification***

Asignification is understood in this research as a semiotic concept able to implicate generative mechanism rupturing the flow of discursive structures as they break or disaggregate into *asignifying particles* or *signaletic matter* or *potentiality materially* present within the referent of a sign as part-signs (Genosko, 2008, 2014). Asignifying semiotics suggests that there are meaningless elements of “*pure intensities*” entering in the constitution of signs, possessing much more potential for consistency within a machinic assemblage than any actual consistency on their own (Genosko, 2008, 2014). Deleuze and Guatari (1987) suggest that a *machinic assemblage* is constituted with *lines of flight* and movements of *deterritorialization and destratification* producing phenomena of slowness/viscosity and acceleration/rupture continually at work against processes of signification. In other words, with reference to the topic of this research, *meaningful items* as *machinic assemblage* are made of possibilities to connect to or to express different topics about a world that is an *open-systemic entropic totality* (Bhaskar, 2008b; DeLanda, 2012). Asignification is consistent with the Dialectical Critical Realism logic of absence because it disaggregate signs into meaningless particles which can be reassembled to form any meaning including the one previously signified within the boundaries of agents’ creativity and the relatively objective reality of a phenomenon (Bhaskar, 2008b; DeLanda, 2012).

Asignification is a call to lose one territory and understanding of the world and adopt or reterritorialize in the new domain following a line of flight slowing or accelerating the reassembly into a new plane of consistency (Muckelbauer, 2007). Asignification signals creativity and innovation (Hickey-Moody, 2015). It is used in this research to explain the effects or causal efficacy of convergent socio-cultural emergent properties of relationships and social media on the reflexivity and creativity of Agents (Bhaskar, 2008b; DeLanda, 2012).

### **c) *On metaphors and metonymies***

*Metaphors* are understood here as linguistic expressions where one or more words for a concept are used outside of its normal conventional meaning to express a *similar* concept (Lakoff, 1992) (e.g.: boiling point). *Metonymy* refers to the substitution of the designation of a feature for the designation of the entity or object of interest (e.g.: Wheels instead of a car).

These rhetorical strategies (figure of speech) signal the work of imagination and creativity exploring the machinic assemblage of signs to convey complex meaning or to mean by navigating socio-cultural and technological influences (Yang & Jiang, 2015). These strategies signal the presence of negation and the deployment of the negation of that negation through asignification and re-signification (Bhaskar, 2008b).

### **3.2.3 The social practice of discourse over social media**

Discourse as a social practice over social media is based upon the necessary relationship between material resources, meaning and competence (Blue et al., 2016; Shove et al., 2012).

#### **a) *Material resources***

Discourse on social media is mediated by material resource represented by the social media platform, the connecting device, the Internet infrastructure and language used, which access for use is expected to be mediated by the affordances discovered by users (Aouragh, 2012; Arafa & Armstrong, 2015; Gerbaudo, 2018).

#### **b) *Meaning***

Social media discourse as a practice, mediates meaning through the mechanism of signification and asignification which imprints and un-imprint or rupture the signification chain of socio-cultural, agential and technological influences (Bhaskar, 2008b; DeLanda, 2012; Genosko, 2008, 2014). These semantic patterns are accessible through syntagmatic and paradigmatic configurations elicited by authors and their audiences (Fairclough, 1992a, 2005). Syntagmatic relations refer to pattern of co-occurrence of expressions in the text, while paradigmatic relations refer to shared representational models of social reality expressed in the text. These semantic regularities are captured by genres and registers acting as signifiers of the text which is thus the sign, in reference to real socio-cultural events or entities which they signify (Bhaskar, 2008b; De Saussure, 2006; Mingers & Willcocks, 2014; Peirce, 1878)..

#### **c) *Competence***

Social media discourse is performed (produced) and consumed by actors possessing the contextual knowledge of the meaning that is being conveyed, the knowledge and skill enabling them to interpret and project it despite socio-cultural or physical constrains and enablement (Blue et al., 2016; Kuijjer, 2014; Shove et al., 2012).

The research thence considers a Socio-cultural dimension concerned with South African communities structural trajectories; Community members agency, skills and relationships; a technological dimension where social media mediate communications as per their affordances and functionalities; and a dimension of the relationship between social movements actors and social media as they use them during social movements (Castells, 2011, 2015; Gerbaudo, 2018).

### **3.2.4 Social media discourse during social movements in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Social media discourse as a social practice entails the existence of internal and necessary relations between material resources, competence and meaning within the spatiotemporal confines of a given community.

In order to generate discourse, SSA community members need to dispose of material resources including the knowledge of a language or any symbolic means of communication, especially calligraphic means, access to social media through access to Internet via an Internet enabled device, knowledge of the use of the device, tacit knowledge of the netiquette, financial means, time, and online social networks (Shove et al., 2012).

SSA community members need to be skilled at manipulating the Internet enabled device and the social media platform where the message is to be posted; skilled at the use of language on social media; skilled at communicating on social media (Shove et al., 2012).

SSA community members bring along symbolic meaning in socially shared ideas and concepts including their sense of belonging to their SSA communities (social identity), SSA local norms and values, symbols and stereotypes, an understanding of social injustices, their desire for social change, and some pan-Africanist ideologies (Shove & Pantzar, 2005).

As an activity performed by SSA community members, the social practice of discourse over social media during social movements is expected to deploy competence in using material resources and manipulating genres and registers to project a particular meaning with the aim of shaping social reality. Also, it is expected that actors' reflexivity, innovation and creativity will provide for the communication of unsuspecting impulses of resistance.

### **3.2.5 Introducing Computer-mediated discourse, Relational communication, and Computer-Mediated Communication theories**

This section situates the research as a computer-mediated discourse inquiry as part of the relational communication sub-field of computer-mediated communication.

#### **a) *Computer-mediated communication***

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is an interdisciplinary field of research focusing on social information processing and exchange in online interpersonal interactions explaining how groups form and develop relational communication (Dillard, Solomon, & Palmer, 1999; Herring & Kapidzic, 2015; Walther, 2018).

CMC has an agenda acknowledging the importance of social and collective identification in preparation, coordination, and sustenance of collective action and seeking to explain that phenomenon (Priante, Ehrenhard, Van den Broek, & Need, 2017).

#### **b) *Computer-mediated discourse***

Computer-mediated discourse (CMD) is defined as

*“The communication produced when human beings interact with one another by transmitting messages via networked or mobile computers, where “computers” are defined broadly to include any digital communication device (Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015, p. 127).*

CMD is a sub-field of computer-mediated communication (CMC) focusing on language and language use; it tends to use discourse analysis as methodology to address that focus.

There is a classification of CMD studies according to medium and channel (the network is the medium and the number of content types or communication source), medium variables (synchronous/asynchronous communication platforms) and CMD modes (Culturally recognised modes such as private e-mail, listserv mailing lists, Usenet newsgroups, IRC and MUDs) (Herring, 2001; Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015). That classification suggests that the IT artefact has an objective influence on the discourse uttered on social media.

The research presented in this thesis qualifies as a computer-mediated discourse inquiry with a focus on discourse understood as a social practice performed over the social media platforms during SSA social movements.

### **c) Relational communication**

Relational communication perspective is an approach in communication studies. It is understood as the affective dimension of group communication (verbal and non-verbal messages and cues) as opposed to the instrumental (instructional and task-oriented) dimension promoting relationships between and amongst group members (Dillard et al., 1999). Such communication is characterised by intensifier variables such as *involvement* and substantive variables such as *dominance/submission* and *affiliation/exclusion* (Dillard et al., 1999; Herring & Kapidzic, 2015; Walther, 2018). These substantive variables compete in the determination of involvement.

Communication over social media is primarily relational since users are usually members of many different networks where their involvement depends on the level of affiliation to the group and the position within the structure of dominance in place in the group and in society at large (Herring & Kapidzic, 2015; Honeycutt & Herring, 2009; Walther, 2018).

This review of the literature continues with a definition of SSA community members' agential impetus.

## **3.3 SSA community members agential impetus during social movement**

*South African community members agential impetus* is understood as the shared preparedness, as both rational and commitment to collective action harboured as a salient defining feature by every actor identifying with the group. It is the hallmark of involvement into the movement, it is the engine of transformative agency. In that sense, agents need to become actors who animate particular social roles into performing the generation of a discourse of resistance over social media as a contribution to the success of the movement. This section discusses agency, actors' identification, the link between social identification and social practice, the impulse of everyday resistance, the device of *deleuzian* spaces of resistance and the hegemon.

### 3.3.1 Agency

The concept of Agency owes a lot to economy and was modelled as a relationship between an agent and a principal, where the principal is seeking control over the agent and the agent is working hard in undermining that control in pursuit of self-interests (Eisenhardt, 1989; Kiser, 1999; Shapiro, 2005); the number of agents and principals was not a problem then, and the influence of culture and social structures was not considered much (Kiser, 1999).

Realist social theory conceptualises agency in relationship between primary and corporate social agents imbued with the power of structurally and culturally changing social reality while being transformed by so doing (Archer, 2003, 2012; Bhaskar, 1993). This research discusses agency in social realism terms (see section 3.9.5). Critical realism and the M/M approach suggest the use of analytical dualism in investigating the dialectical relationship between structures and agency (Archer, 2003, 2012; Bhaskar, 1993). Such an investigation keeps away from denying autonomy and causal efficacy to agency (downward conflation), to structures (upward conflation), or to suggest that these two are the faces of the same coin and could not possibly be conceptually separated (central conflation) (Archer, 1995, 2007b, 2012).

### 3.3.2 Actor's identification during social movements

The practice of discourse over social media during social movements requires the efficacious performance of an **actor** to be enacted and contribute to group success (Baumeister, Ainsworth, & Vohs, 2016). But there aren't that many social actors around because of the difficulty for agents to become actors as they need to find a social role to animate for it to happen (Archer, 2000). **Social roles** are understood as prior definition of obligations, sanctions and interests, and entailing necessary and internal relationships with resources and rules; "institutional level" pertaining to social integration and "System level" constituting a prominent and specific social feature (Archer, 1995).

The M/M approach suggests a *process of identification* through which an individual endowed with a *personal identity*, as a member of a particular community, will acquire a social identity by animating a social role into acting upon the world (Archer, 2000; Heath, Rabinovich, & Barreto, 2017). Social identity refers to an individual self-conceptualisation or self-categorisation as a member of a particular group (Heath et al., 2017). A social identity is arrived at by *inferring* (e.g.: Induction, deduction, abduction and retroduction) upon *accessible* salient social categories allowing individuals to see themselves as *befitting* the *prototype* subjectively ascribed to a group or community on the basis of shared geo-historical trajectory of Socio-cultural conditioning (context), shared emotions, shared attitudes and shared behaviours (Hornsey, 2008). That intragroup process is described by the self-categorisation theory wing of the social identity approach (Haslam, Jetten, & Haslam, 2009; Heath et al., 2017; Hogg & Reid, 2006; Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel, 2010).

The social identity approach is a very influent theoretical foundation in group processes, group interactions and self-concept research (Heath et al., 2017; Hogg & Reid, 2006; Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel, 2010). The social identity approach mainly joins theoretical contributions from the social identity theory and self-categorisation theory (Hornsey, 2008). This approach suggests that group membership can pervade self-concept and satisfy psychological need for self-esteem, sense of

belonging and sense of meaning (Haslam et al., 2009). Such positive outcomes imply that social identification function as a source of sustainable well-being, resilience, and willingness to contribute to the group (Knight, Haslam, & Haslam, 2010); and can even become the crux of sustained resistance (Haslam & Reicher, 2012). Higher levels of group identification have been found to be determinant in group preparedness for action, meaning individual preparedness for collective action (De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Haslam & Reicher, 2012)

However, social identities are not always yielding positive outcomes. They are suggested responsible for negative stereotyping, prejudice, various forms of collective hate, and horrific actions as conscripts self-justify their behaviours on a measure of performance in the name of the group (Crabtree, Haslam, Postmes, & Haslam, 2010; Ouwerkerk, Van Dijk, Vonkeman, & Spears, 2016; Reicher, Haslam, & Rath, 2008). In addition, personal identity tends to moderate the influence of social identity in the individual dialectical struggle to align self and group interest (Baumeister et al., 2016).

Applying these insights to SSA community members' social practice of discourse over social media during social movements suggests that actors, despite the conditions of their *lifeworlds*, would willingly step into various roles redefining their self-concepts, including roles bound to social media communicative practice, in a bid to contributing and giving back to their communities of resistance (Haslam & Reicher, 2012).

### 3.3.3 Linking social identification to practice

It has been suggested that higher level of group identification was determinant in the conversion of discontent into participation in collective action (De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Haslam & Reicher, 2012). Social identification on affective and behavioural basis sets the level for collective action preparedness (collective intentionality) and performance (De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999).

Haslam & Reicher (2012) propose a *social identity model of resistance dynamics* (SIRMD) emphasising 3 dialectical moments including the development of a shared or unifying oppositional identity, conditions for overt action strategy and organising effective resistance practice:

- The oppositional shared identity emerges from the *common experience* of social injustices, the *time* spent in discovery, observing and noticing similarities of fate and similarity of self-categorisation, and the *permeability of lifeworlds*. In critical realist terms, that would be a *negating identity* able to absent individual absences and free the subject.
- The conditions for overt action strategy include the ability to present lifeworld conditions as wrong or *illegitimate* (not satisfying the conditions of legitimacy), and to be able to devise a sense of *possible alternate desirable circumstances (cognitive alternatives)*.
- The organising of the resistance necessitates the critical role of a skilled coordinating *leadership* that is coherent with the group's Socio-cultural conditioning in addition to the *support of a third party* or an opportunity in the social context allowing for resistance to bloom.

Haslam & Reicher (2012) argue that resistance emerges out of the on-going intergroup process itself, as the dominated group stabilises its identity against the hegemon, articulates its needs and the way to satisfy them in accordance with its negative perception of the illegitimacy of the hegemonic group

and its hopeful vision, and coordinates for their achievements by navigating hegemonic impediments (De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Haslam & Reicher, 2012). This takes on the catalytic role of social identity to collective action or social movements makes it *sine qua non* to the initiation and the sustainability of the movement of resistance.

However, the model reliance on the role of a leader as a focal point in the collective action makes it difficult to envision leaderless movements where leadership is negated (because it tends to be corrupted or eliminated) and covered deliberation fostered. It makes it difficult to envision the structure of new social movement: a structure of networked everyday resistance.

This research agrees with the social identity model of resistance dynamics (SIMRD) with an exception around the topic of 'movement leadership'. For SIMRD, ideas of *leaderlessness* or *horizontal leadership* or even *distributed leadership* (understood here as a social practice bound to a social context of leadership processes which highlights inclusivity, collectiveness and collaboration for a wide range of contributors in the performance of relevant activities) (Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016; Oborn, Barrett, & Dawson, 2013; Tian, Risku, & Collin, 2016), as well as ideas of *choreography of assembly* (Gerbaudo, 2018) which may explain new social movements leadership structure, are not considered. Further, as conceptual categories, the SIMRD seems to conflate resistance with collective frontal opposition; making it difficult to suggest that oppression could be individually resisted in everyday forms of activities.

### **3.3.4 The impulse of everyday resistance**

Research has suggested various modes or forms of resistance mostly conspicuously oppositional like a social movement or so much less recognizable as everyday forms of resistance (Hall et al., 2015; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016). Resistance is found to have diverse characteristics including physical and material bearings acted upon; symbolic behaviour (language, dance, gestures, silence and speech); level of coordination (scale and organisation); specific targeting of entities and objects to resist (individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and social structures), particular goals (aims of resisting); expected recognition (visibility and remembrance) and particular intent (conscious or not so conscious intentionality of the resister) (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). In addition resisters come from all social positions and resistance is not always meant at social transformation, especially in case of everyday resistance (Hall et al., 2015; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016).

"Everyday forms of resistance" or "everyday resistance" is a concept proposed by (James C. Scott, 1985, 1989) to describe the relentless, immanent, anonymous, covert, mutinous and pilfering acts of defiance and struggle practices against the power of the hegemon intentionally performed by individuals responding to oppression in the context of class struggles. Everyday resistance is contingent, requires none to very little coordination or planning with others; avoids symbolic confrontation with authority and social norms; tends to confer instantaneous and concrete advantage to the resisting individual while depriving the appropriating class of resources (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016). Everyday resistance differ from traditional collective action as it suffers from a lack of recognition and a shroud of doubt over resister's intent (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Johansson

& Vinthagen, 2016). Its aggregated effect when widespread has proven hindering to the workings of targeted entities, creating change opportunities for the whole society to transform as per some inexorable natural proclivity (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016; James C. Scott, 1985, 1989).

However, authors have criticised the concept of “everyday resistance” for its weaknesses in explaining change and in separating ritualistic or symbolic forms of resistance (false consciousness) not meant to generate any change but to reinforce the *status quo*, from real intended actions of defiance which do have an impact (Gutmann, 1993; Hall et al., 2015).

Johansson & Vinthagen (2016) framed out the concept of “everyday resistance” as a Socio-cultural contingent practice that is historically entangled with the heterogeneous configuration of power. They suggested analysing everyday forms of resistance according to:

1. Repertoires of everyday resistance in relation to the configurations of power;
2. Relationships of agents carrying out the acts of resistance;
3. Spatialization in terms of social position and physical location; and
4. Temporalization of everyday resistance occurrences.

Johansson & Vinthagen (2016) framework is useful in helping to quickly grasp the phenomenon of everyday resistance but does not allow for analytical dualism and a conceptualisation of power as an emergent property of relationship.

The concept of everyday resistance is very important to this research because it allows inquiring on the spontaneity, scale, agents membership, network structure and apparent leaderless characteristics of new social movements, by presupposing the existence of a realm or layer of society where the movement has been going on and garnering momentum unnoticed for sometimes, before spilling over into public space.

### **3.3.5 Networked resistance**

The notion of *networked resistance* is increasingly considered in social science, media and communication studies to explain the structure of new social movements and digital age global activism (Atkinson, 2009; Cammaerts, 2013; Castells, 2011, 2015; Tai, 2015). It stems from an understanding of social networks as systems of connections (direct and indirect strong, weak or latent ties) between actors (individuals, organisations or institutions) engaging in collaborative endeavours (Cammaerts, 2013). It entertains a discursive opportunity structure which binds disconnected actors, as a frame “*to justify a particular struggle, to propagate an alternative vision and to mobilize for direct action*” (Cammaerts, 2013, p. 425; Yang & Jiang, 2015). The discursive opportunity structure should be aligned with the political opportunity structure to allow for networked resistance to be successful (Cammaerts, 2013; Castells, 2015; Tai, 2015). Networked resistance is driven by leaderlessness to increase deniability and reduce the probability of arrests compromising the movement (Gray, 2013; Roberts, 2016; Rocheleau, 2015; Tai, 2015). The group or cell or faction provides ideological guidance and objectives (Roberts, 2016; Rocheleau, 2015; Tai, 2015; Yang & Jiang, 2015).

### 3.3.6 Spaces of resistance

It has been suggested that resistance was always located in space and time. Deleuze & Guattari (1987) suggested a conceptualisation of social reality as a Rhizomatic space constituted by multiplicities or smooth (asignified) spaces always being redefined and always transforming or becoming; as opposed to striated or marked or signified spaces always reproducing a predefined structure.

Social media understood as platform enabling digital connections thus enabling digital spaces of communication, are expected to display the characteristics of Deleuze-Guattarian rhizomatic structures (Beck, 2016). Within these structures discursive flow could be ruptured or asignified to form smooth spaces within striated spaces of communication (Beck, 2016). As such, networks over social media can be described as spaces of resistance as they continually deterritorialize and reterritorialize in new planes of signification according to the rhythm and variety of topics of interest and networking activities (e.g.: befriending).

In the case of this research, discourse as an enactment of resistance is seen as an asignifying rupture deterritorialising mainstream discourses and reterritorializing them in new ways which reflect authors aspirations against the domination and power of established postcolonial systems in South Africa.

### 3.3.7 The hegemon

Hegemony is understood in this research as the focus of the relentless struggle to “*construct or sustain or fracture alliances and relations of domination/subordination*” around points of extreme precariousness between South African community members and authorities or powers within their environment (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 92; Gramsci, Hoare, & Smith, 1971). These points of great instability can take economic, ideological and political shapes. Hegemony represents a state of legitimised dominance (obtained through consent to its moral and intellectual leadership) of a group or class or alliances of classes over another or others (Gramsci et al., 1971; Jefferson, 2002). Hegemony in this research can be envisioned as the socio-cultural conditions behind the fee increases and the precariousness of the majority of South African higher education students of African descent or racially non-white; it points at the *structural formation* which causal powers are responsible for their social situation.

The literature review continues with an examination of social and political participation practices of relationships with local powers.

## 3.4 Social and political participation

This section presents underpinning key concepts of social and political participation broken down as being shaped by representative, deliberative, participatory democracy and the public sphere; the possibility of social choice and the importance of social capital; public participation in governance; ideology, power, and social influence; online social networks and social capital; new social movements.

### **3.4.1 Democracy, social choice and social capital**

The most advanced democratic countries are described as representative, deliberative, and participative. That description suggests a political arrangement that implies to maintain a permanent and dynamic engagement with all stakeholders in order to reach best possible collective decisions (Fischer, 2010). These ideas place public participation as the method of democracy while acknowledging the possibility of a social choice and the importance of the social capital that fuels it.

Ideas of deliberative and participatory democracy call for the fair consideration of community deliberation and resulting choices in governance decision making. In order to achieve that, social choice theory (Sen, 1999) attempts to resolve the issue of relating social judgements and committees decisions to the various and disparate views and interests of the individuals who make up communities by suggesting the consideration of community deliberation through public participation (Dryzek & List, 2003; Dryzek, 2005; Fishkin, 2009). The concept of *public participation* suggests to empower weak stakeholders via the development of social capital for fairer and more prosperous democratic governance (Islam, Merlo, Kawachi, Lindström, & Gerdtham, 2006).

### **3.4.2 Public participation and e-Participation in governance**

*Public participation* can be understood as a process of engaging with individuals through information, consultation and direct involvement into the affairs of the city (Macintosh, 2004; RSA-DPLG, 2007a). That process assumes an active role for individual citizens and other stakeholders culminating in control and power (Arnstein, 1969). Public participation is an on-going political process happening in government as a citizen engagement endeavour, and out of government as informal and formal deliberations generating public opinion, shared understanding, aligned interest, commitment and action to resolve issues (Beynon-Davies et al., 2003).

Tambouris et al. (2007) defined eParticipation as: *“efforts to broaden and deepen political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their elected representatives and governments, using ICTs”*. eParticipation research is shaped around a narrative where eParticipation stakeholders and individual actors lead online participatory activities in the context of influencing information availability, infrastructure, underlying technologies, and accessibility (De Liddo & Buckingham Shum, 2010; Medaglia, 2012; Sæbø, Rose, & Flak, 2008). E-Governance can be seen at the confluence of e-Democracy and e-Government (Chadwick & May, 2003; Chadwick, 2009). E-Participation is understood in this study as an e-Governance process.

### **3.4.3 Ideology, power, social influence and legitimacy**

This section defines the concepts of ideology, power, and social influence in this research. These concepts are complex and there are many definitions for each of them. For the needs of this research, workable definitions were constructed which will be used throughout the thesis.

#### **a) Ideology**

Ideology is understood in this research as a cultural model of social success constituted by a social orientation based on core beliefs and values that characterise the thinking of a group of individuals or

organisations and legitimate action towards a particular social order (Carvalho, 2007; Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009). It is usually constituted by 1) an account of the existing socio-cultural order, 2) a model of the desired society, and 3) an outline of how change should be brought about. It is multidimensional and comprehends economic and social dimensions at its core, and can exist beyond left/right or liberal/conservative distinctions in political settings (Duckitt, Wagner, Du Plessis, & Birum, 2002; Jost et al., 2009; Feldman & Johnston, 2014).

#### **b) Power**

Power is understood in this research as a generative mechanism or tendency emerging from Socio-cultural structures of society constraining or enabling agents into performing an activity, causing another party to comply and execute a directive even against its will. It has also been defined as the ability to cause another party to do something he/she/it would not have done otherwise (French & Raven, 1959; Gaski, 1984; Raven, 1993). Power can be derived or based on information, reward, coercion, legitimacy, referent, expertise and credibility (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1990, 1993; Aguinis, Simonsen, & Pierce, 1998). This research is interested in the powers which SSA community members endured within their social environment and deployed through the discourse availed over social media during social movements.

#### **c) Social influence**

Social influence can be defined as normative and informational influence to individuals in a social network (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Li, 2012). Normative social influence generates compliance to a particular norm, while informational social influence generates identification and internalization of information as evidence about reality (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975; Li, 2012). Individuals will have their behaviour changed because of the application of social influence upon them. Social influence can be achieved through the use of persuasive messages (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975; Li, 2012). Social Influence is understood in this research as an individual and organisational use of persuasive messages over social media to modify the outcome of social movements to its advantage.

The rationale of the use of these concepts in this research is an understanding that ideology motivates the use of power to influence the direction of the social movement.

#### **d) Legitimacy and legitimation**

The concept of Legitimacy is understood in this research as an emergent property (generative mechanism) bestowed by a legitimation structure. Its activation structures the relationships of *power/dominance* and *social influence* within the communication space of a community.

As the actual use of power to maintain a particular state of society tends to fail to yield expected effects and rather destabilise the situation, authorities have sought to legitimise the institutions and structures organising the state of affairs. As a consequence, the deployment of power and influence depends on the perception of legitimacy which gears agents towards voluntary compliance with rules and the choices which interpret the rules; and also, towards subordination to authority. Legitimacy emerges from predictability of actions, conformity to historical practice or systemic requirements, and

alignment with the social values of the local community (Brower, 2003; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). It is suggested that procedural justice is a form of legitimacy which can be achieved through the fairness of the procedures through which authority is exercised (Tyler, 2006). In that sense, legitimation is the process of achieving legitimacy through exhibiting predictability of actions, conformity to historical practice or systemic requirements, and alignment with the social values of the local community.

It is suggested that structural transformation would occur and would be reflected in the shifts or alterations of structural or systemic logic (organising principle) by which legitimacy is evaluated (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Technological or regulatory ambiguities and contradictions are associated with insurgent logics responsible for the change of structural logic (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

As a result, authorities and their discourses would lose legitimacy if their actions and their effects would stop being predictable, conform to historic or systemic requirements and if they wouldn't uphold local social values; leading to perception of illegitimacy, distrust and rejection.

There are many definitions of the concept of legitimacy according to the actors involved in the relationship (personal and collective legitimacy), according to the level of analysis (micro-macro or individual and institutional or systemic level of analysis), and depending on the field of research or the theoretical underpinning ascribed to (Social science, organisation and management science, social psychology, psychology, Institutional theory) (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Dart, 2004; Deephouse, Bundy, Tost, & Suchman, 2017; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Tost, 2011; Tyler, 2006). Most of these definitions stem from non-realist theoretical underpinnings and are incompatible with critical realism core beliefs and assumptions.

#### **3.4.4 Online social network and social capital**

Bhaskar (1978) suggested that reality was comprised of objects, entities and structures that have real internal mechanisms with tendencies, liabilities and powers that can be triggered to produce observable outcomes.

This research recognises that actors of social movements in sub-Saharan Africa are organised in online social networks tapping in accrued social capital to support activities (Arafa & Armstrong, 2015; Johannessen & Munkvold, 2012).

This research is concerned with online social networks. Online social networks represent virtual communities which connect, interact and cumulate resources using relationships established over the Internet (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011). These networks, in a political sense, consist of people sharing an ideology and would leverage the social capital within their network to achieve their political goals.

Social capital can be broken down into cognitive and structural social capital. Cognitive social capital refers to belief, values, norms and attitudes, while structural social capital refers to resources availed by the extent and the quality of an actor's relationships within a social network (Islam et al., 2006; Johnston, Tanner, Lalla, & Kawalski, 2013). This research is interested in both cognitive and

structural social capital as it involves investigating their roles in actors' deployment of normative and informational social influence.

### **3.4.5 New Social movement**

#### **a) *Social movement theory***

Social movement theory is an umbrella term for theoretical contributions from the investigation of social movements. These theories include amongst the most influential in the field: the collective behaviour theory, the Resource Mobilization Theory (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995), the Political Process Theory and New Social movement theory. Authors argue that social movements are a form of collective behaviour that would emerge when significant social and cultural anomalies would occur; and would depend on the mobilizing structure, the political opportunity structure and of cultural framing for the intensity of their impact (Benford, 1997; Morris, 2000; Tilly, 1978). They also suggest the use of resources including time, money and political skills where necessary in determining the success of the movement in achieving expected change. These views were seeing social movements and their participants as non-rational, emotional, and not showing much agency in the process (Benford, 1997; Tilly, 1978). The concept of "*Cultural Framing*" refers to a process of setting up an interpretive schemata that reduces reality (natural, practical and social) to selective "*punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment*" (Benford, 1997 p415). The latest views of social movement theory give a greater place to human agency as per resource mobilisation theory and political process model.

According to resource mobilisation theory (Brady et al., 1995), social movements should be understood in terms of a model of conflict between organised actors over the use of common social values. Institutional and non-institutional collective action are similar, since they both entail conflicts built in institutionalised power relations which enduringly produce their goals and grievances; it involves the rational pursuit of group interests; the formation of the movement depends on the resources, organisation and the opportunities for collective action; mobilisation would involve a large-scale formal organisation; and success is demonstrated by the recognition of the group as a political actor and by material benefits (Cohen, 1985).

This research agrees that social movements are a form of collective behaviour triggered by social injustices which caused an emotional peak or outrage in a particular community and would depend on mobilizing structures, political opportunity structure, and cultural framing for its success (Benford, 1997; Castells, 2015; Tilly, 1978; Touraine, 1985; Vaillancourt, 1991).

#### **b) *New social movements***

Touraine (1978) suggested that a social movement is an organised collective behaviour of a class agent fighting against its class adversary for the social trajectory of history in a concrete community. That definition carries both a sense of conflict between classes, a sense of agency and a sense of history grounded in the transformation of Socio-cultural structures. Castells (2015) who bases his

work on Touraine's approach suggested that new social movements which he calls "*networked social movements*" are characterised by their use of social media and their networked structures:

- Networked in multiple forms\horizontal and fostering collaboration and solidarity
- The virality of the movement which spread by contagion
- Leaderless movement since there seems not to be any particular one or any concert to select or nominate one
- Highly self-reflexive
- Non-programmatic
- Aim at changing the values of society

Turner (2013) also noticed that New Social Movements were characterised by their use of the Internet which provides them with an ever more rapid growth of mobilisation and their unusual structure displaying polycentricity (recursive relationship of online/offline mobilisation efforts), reticulation (networking through social media) and segmentation (decentralised networks).

Castells (2015) suggested the notions of a "*space of autonomy*" referring to protestors' occupation of the urban public space as a symbolic networked place both online and offline for a free community; and of "*culture of autonomy*" referring to a culture of the information age emerging from the interaction between cultural processes and ICTs, for their development of an ideology of self-reliance vis-à-vis established Socio-cultural institutions.

This research will be more concerned with the new social movement theory because of its dialectical assumptions about the nature of social movements and its approach to social media as irradiating their properties into the fabric of the movement.

### **c) *New Social movements in SSA***

South African social movements represent an expression of the contradictions and hierarchies of societies about unequal distribution of resources, influence, education and differences of class, gender and ethnicity (Larmer, 2010). Since 2010, there have been an impressive number of SSA social movements with a dramatically increasing use of ICTs and social media in particular (Honwana, 2012, 2014). In all of these movements, social media were used as a "space of transformative negation", carrying messages across ideological villages deep in the forest of muted voices, creating a new space for community members to exercise their political power and force government to abandon unpopular policies (Larmer, 2010; Thigo, 2013). These genuine African social movements are pro-democracy and carrying local socio-economic issues; they seem not to be financed by western European entities (but rather by some local means or some interested eastern entities) and they are sceptical of globalisation and neoliberalism (De Waal & Ibreck, 2013; Larmer, 2010). They represent cases of new social movements in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **3.5 Social media in the convergence culture**

This section presents social media in the convergence culture as it concerns individual citizens' and organised non-governmental and not for profit institutions in their attempts to respond to the demands of social challenges, opportunities and aspirations through social media mediated participatory communication. Themes and concepts explored include social media as a technology and in its reality

as a causal machine, virality on social media, the convergence culture shaping of media, netiquette and online values, discourse on social media, an overview of sub-Saharan Africans preferred social media platforms (Twitter™, Facebook™ and YouTube™).

### **3.5.1 Social Media**

Social media considered in this research are social networking sites (SNS). As such, they can be understood as an instantiation of complex social networks on web based technologies and systems creating interactive platforms allowing individuals and organisations to share, co-create, exchange and modify user-generated content (Johannessen & Munkvold, 2012; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Boyd & Ellison, 2007). As such, they are an IT artefact considered to be embedded in time, space, discourse and community, and emerging from ongoing socio-economic interactive practices (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001).

Social media have political powers (Shirky, 2011) and were reported to foster political learning, engagement and mobilisation (Kaufhold, Valenzuela, & Gil de Zuniga, 2010). They are alleged to empower people by increasing their feelings of security, personal freedom and influence (Castells, 2015).

The social media platform which are investigated in this research include Facebook™, Twitter™ and YouTube™ considered preferred by Internet users in sub-Saharan Africa and especially in South Africa (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2015). These 3 platforms also are reported to have been used by protesters with Facebook™ to schedule the event, Twitter™ to coordinate it and YouTube™ to broadcast it to the world (Arafa & Armstrong, 2015).

This research focuses on the emerging interaction between humans (agency), socio-cultural systems and social media as online messages of influence are shaped by social media affordances (Treem & Leonardi, 2012).

### **3.5.2 Twitter™**

#### **a) Description**

Twitter™ is a micro-blogging social networking service founded in 2006 and operated by Twitter Inc., a company based in the USA. Twitter™ is accessible on SMS and Internet enabled devices (Desktop and mobile PCs, mobile phones, and other wearable devices) through a web browser, application programming interfaces (APIs), and various third party client applications (Dindar & Yaman, 2018; Honeycutt & Herring, 2009; Huberman, Romero, & Wu, 2008; Marwick & Boyd, 2010).

The platform has become a news aggregator for many who use it to connect to influential and relevant individuals and organisations (including media houses, businesses, NGOs, governments, etc.) in order to be the first to know about events (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010).

As a social networking service, Twitter is meant for a user to develop and enhance its network of valuable acquaintances; creating and sustaining strong and weak ties through the sharing of useful information. Users are expected to be information sources, seekers and friends (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009).

It is suggested that just about 30% of messages on Twitter™ carry some meaningful and useful content representing conversations and collaboration trails between users (Boyd, Golder, & Lotan, 2010).

The use of Twitter™ and social media in general has presented some privacy issues forcing users to employ innovative communicative strategies to navigate them (Giglietto & Lee, 2017; Marwick & Boyd, 2014).

### **b) Features and Functionalities**

- In principle, Twitter™ is a service that allows registered users to post publicly available messages or “**Tweets**” which cannot be more than 140 characters long; and private messages directed to dedicated recipients (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009).
- It makes it possible to “**re-tweet**” or to re-post a message so that your followers can also see it; as well as to **pin a tweet** and keep it on top of your time line so that visitors to your wall can see it
- **Tweets** are usually text or URLs to main type of content (photos, videos, audio, etc.)
- Every **registered user** is given an account with a **personalised interface or profile** where posts from the people in their network (those they follow and those following them), some advertising posts and recommended posts on the basis of the topics they showed some interest about or the interests of the people they follow.
- It helps to create a network of “**followers**” or entities receiving your posts on their “**timeline**”
- It allows *addressivity* with the use of the character “@” before the username of the entity to which the message is addressed (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009).
- It also allows to tag (using “#” character) a message or set up a keyword to relate it to a specific topic in order to create coherence and help anyone to follow a story that is trending
- Every post is given an “**identification number**”
- It makes it possible to rate message with a “**Like**” sign

### **c) Twitterature and genres on Twitter™**

Aciman & Rensin (2009) coined the expression “Twitterature” to describe a new literary trend bound to the use of the social media platform Twitter™ and to its 140 characters constrain for a publication or “*Tweet*”. *Twitterature* is understood here as a digital literary space describing a pattern of condensed and fragmentary short-form of fictional compositions using a symbolic and implied narrative structure availed over the social media platform Twitter™ a “*Tweet*” at a time (Al Sharaqī & Abbasi, 2016; Rudin, 2011). The *Twitterature* sphere offers *nanofictions* ranging from 1 tweet to a few hundred from a single author; *crowd-sourced narratives* collaboratively developed by a community of authors interested in supporting a storyline; and *infographics* using graphic representation of data and information to tell a story (Rudin, 2011).

Tweets are devised as multi-modal aphorisms of prosaic, poetic and fictional genres with various communicative purposes including information sharing, opinion sharing emotion sharing and calls and instructions (Sæbø, 2011)

### **3.5.3 Facebook™**

One of the most used social networking services in SSA is Facebook™. Facebook™ is offered by a USA based privately controlled corporation of the same name since 2004. The service allows people to disclose and to learn more about themselves and about others; while fostering Active Social Contributions; Passive Engagement; News and Information; Real-Time Social Interaction (Warren, Sulaiman, & Jaafar, 2014; Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012). As such, users on Facebook™ tend to provide a wealth of information about themselves to the point of disclosing personal information.

Research suggests that the way people use Facebook™ depends a lot on their personality traits with extraverts, open and neurotic characters representing the majority of users, and bestowing greater levels of narcissism, exhibitionism, and leadership (Moore & Mcelroy, 2012; Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Wilson et al., 2012).

The use of Facebook™ has raised privacy and disclosure concern leading to abuses and crimes.

### **3.5.4 YouTube™**

YouTube™ is an American video-sharing online service launched in 2005 and operates since November 2006 as a Google Inc. subsidiary. The service allows registered users to upload, view, rate, share, add to favourites, report and comment on videos. A wide variety of user generated, and corporate content is displayed. The service represents an effortless means of broadcasting video content. Videos are placed on YouTube™ and shared using the unique URL of the content. Also, it fosters “on demand” video broadcasting and consumption; and benefitted from smartphones video abilities to bring in lively users’ productions. It also allows to create with relative ease public and subscription based private channels.

### **3.5.5 Social media affordances and digital materiality**

#### **a) *Technology affordance and digital materiality***

Affordances in this research are understood as the possibilities or opportunities for action which social media offer to social actors during social movements, as they interact with that object in their environment (C. Anderson & Robey, 2017). They represent emergent relational properties of the relationship between potential users and the object before them (Gibson, 1986; McGrenere & Wayne, 2000; Treem & Leonardi, 2012; Volkoff & Strong, 2013). The theoretical understanding of social media suggests their *digital materiality* as they matter or bestow properties which shape behaviours, represent a practical instantiation of social systems and bear significance to stakeholders interacting with and through them (Leonardi, 2010). That materiality will be perceived in the *affordances or generative mechanisms* at the root of experienced emergent usage of social media in social movements in SSA (McGrenere & Wayne, 2000; Volkoff & Strong, 2013). The idea of *digital materiality* is linked to the concept of *socio-materiality* which is linked to agential realism which differs ontologically from critical realism by entangling the social and the material so as to eliminate any difference between the two (Mutch, 2013; S. V. Scott & Orlikowski, 2013). This research does not subscribe to socio-material entanglement and looks at the phenomenon from the perspective of the relationship between Agency and technology in terms of *Agential causal action, Misfits and*

*workarounds, social embeddedness and technology affordances* (Leonardi, 2013; Mutch, 2013; Ononiwu, 2015).

In this research, it is understood that generative mechanisms from social media will be impeding or promoting the achievement of community members' agential change, which must go through them before appearing in the observable discourses on social media platforms.

### **b) Social media affordances considered in this research**

Authors have suggested various sets and models of social media affordances. By combining and eliciting sets of social media affordances by Conole and Dyke (2004), Bower (2008), and Treem and Leonardi (2012), this research has grouped social media affordances according to their areas of efficacy: communication and media affordances, socio-cultural affordances, hedonic affordances and artefactual affordances (see Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Social media affordances**

<b>Social media affordance</b>	<b>Description</b>
Communication and media affordances	
Communication affordance	Mechanism allowing the generation, editing and exchange of meaningful content
Virality	Mechanism giving an exponential or viral spread to the reach of a message
Media synthesis affordance	Mechanism mediating or allowing to carry over multi-modal meaningful content
Socio-cultural affordances	
Social embeddedness	Mechanism implanted within the design of an artefact which enforces or reproduces the socio-cultural environment of its design
Social networking affordance	Mechanism promoting social network creation, development, disbandment and social capital exploitation
Potential deceptiveness	Mechanism amenable to deception (Surveillance, threats, etc.)
Hedonic affordance	
Entertainment affordance	Mechanism inciting user's pleasure and satisfaction (Rewards, aesthetic, acknowledgement, etc.)
Artefactual affordances	
Usability affordance	Mechanism facilitating user's effective manipulation of social media
Accessibility affordance	Mechanism facilitating access to the potential of social media
Navigation affordance	Mechanism facilitating the exploration of information over social media
Immediacy	Spatiotemporal mechanism creating a sense of closeness and instantaneity in the delivery of content
Persistence	Mechanism rendering messages durable by allowing their storage and reusability

### **3.5.6 Virality on social media**

**Virality** is understood as characteristics of content inciting it sharing with peers (Heimbach, Schiller, Strufe, & Hinz, 2015). Virality is based on "Word of mouth" which is suggested to have 5 main functions: Impression management, emotional regulation, information acquisition, social bonding and persuasion (J. Berger, 2014). Berger (2013) suggests that the identification of inner remarkability, leveraging of game mechanics and to make people feel like insiders, are areas to be considered

when using a semiotic object to enable the virality of social media content. The combination of elements from these areas in a post are expected to generate users' or readers' emotionality, positivity, awe, anger, anxiety and sadness, inciting them to share it widely within their social networks (J. Berger & Milkman, 2012). Viral content is expected to have been crafted or benefited from bearing *virality* characteristics: as a consequence, virality can also be understood as an affordance of social media communication

### **3.5.7 Convergence culture and social media values**

It is reported that the media industry endeavours to distribute information and other products across multiple platforms, in the context of fast pervasive computing and cross-media ownership, led to user further empowerment over the generation, the reshaping and redistribution of the products of that industry (Vujnovic et al., 2010). The concept of "*convergence culture*" is an attempt to describe the phenomenon of media convergence matching a fast growing participatory culture (Deuze, 2007; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins & Deuze, 2008). To describe the phenomenon of media convergence as media participation by consumers and as a convergence of economic and content delivery outlets, Jenkins (2004) observes about the American media environment:

*"on the one hand, new media technologies have lowered production and distribution costs, expanded the range of available delivery channels and enabled consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate and recirculate media content in powerful new ways; on the other hand, there has been an alarming concentration of the ownership of mainstream commercial media, with a small handful of multinational media conglomerates dominating all sectors of the entertainment industry." (Jenkins, 2004 p.33)*

The culture which emerged from these developments carrying democratic values of collective intelligence, participation and transparency was conceptualised as "*Participatory culture*" (Jenkins, 2006). While the liberal capitalist driven convergence of commercial media platforms and their ownership towards a few dominating outlets and a handful of multinational conglomerates is known as *media convergence*. Social media epitomises *convergence culture* with the aggregation of information channels and the economic dominance of the conglomerates controlling them, and by extension globally controlling the means of cultural production and distribution in an era of neo-liberal capitalism (Jenkins, 2014). As such, convergence culture is a socio-cultural phenomenon which legitimates neo-liberal capitalism, and is disseminated through the pervasiveness of ICTs (Fisher, 2010). Recent Sub-Saharan African social movements have enjoyed the use of social media in organising, informing, and mobilising for collective action enabled by the relational emergent properties of *Convergence Culture* (Ekine, 2010; Honwana, 2012). These relational emergent properties underpin activities such as citizen/participatory journalism and social media activism, sometimes emerging as netiquette.

### **3.5.8 Netiquette**

Netiquette can be understood as widely accepted ways of behaving over the Internet (Preece, 2004; Scheuermann & Taylor, 1997). Netiquette is applied to social media and suggests attitudes and values understood to be those of the community of social media users (Preece, 2004). Netiquette used to be understood a set of rules of ethical conduct of Usenet groups and mailing lists (Preece, 2004; Scheuermann & Taylor, 1997). These early groups were accommodating their membership's

Western European and North American cultural attitudes and values in communication about particular events; and were not really trying to accommodate other cultural sensibilities. Further, depending on the community or the activity concerned with the communication being conducted different types of online behaviours are expected (Madden et al., 2013; Sabra, 2017; Scheuermann & Taylor, 1997). As a consequence, netiquette is not a universal set of online attitudes and values but rather community wise sets of tenets (Sabra, 2017; Scheuermann & Taylor, 1997); Nevertheless, here are a few categories widely accepted over social media (Madden et al., 2013; Sabra, 2017; Scheuermann & Taylor, 1997):

- Make use of universal empathy
- Active participation and contribution
- Avoid malicious behaviours
- Have respect for the privacy of others
- Be concise and specific in your posts

Netiquette rules on social media carry particular structural and cultural relational emergent properties which when interacting with local contexts and SSA community members agencies are expected to generate unintended outcomes in their discourse.

### **3.5.9 Globalisation and Social media**

There are many definitions for the concept of globalisation. In this research, *globalisation* refers to a spatial and socio-cultural systemic form emerging from mainly North American and Western European imperialist neo-liberal and capitalist tendencies of market expansion, cultural dominance, and the growing power of corporations and other nonstate actors; in addition to the dominance of international institutions over country states and the growing irrelevance of national borders to trade (Buckley & Ghauri, 2004; Orbie, 2016; Pieterse, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2004). *Globalisation* is a social, economic, and cultural phenomenon which started at the end of the *Cold War* and the collapse of the *eastern or soviet bloc* and was particularly characterised by the spatial scale of the reach of human activities over the planet. *Globalisation* is suggested to consist of social hybridization and cultural homogenisation to western modernity, a process that thrusts people and individualities into a single world society; it is also understood as economic internationalisation and the spread of capitalist market relations, generated by the globalisation of production and finance (Buckley & Ghauri, 2004; Jenkins, 2014; Orbie, 2016; Pieterse, 2006).

Social media represent a category of networked and global media, creating a unique plane where time and space are contracted making meaning dispersion immediate; where the heterogeneity of meaning is exceptional; and where economic activities last within the time of a connexion.

### **3.6 Discourse on Social media**

This section reviews the literature about discourse on social media. The discourse on social media which is considered in this research is South African community members' practice of generating content over social media platforms during social movements. Ideas explored include social media discourse and its genres and registers, virality on social media, the convergence culture shaping of

media, netiquette and online values, discourse on social media, an overview of sub-Saharan Africans preferred social media platforms (Twitter™, Facebook™ and YouTube™).

### **3.6.1 Discourse, genre and register on social media**

Discourse denotes the deployment of competence in using material resources and manipulating genres and registers to project a meaning indicating recurrent themes with the aim of shaping social.

#### **a) *Discourse***

Discourse is understood in this research as a social practice of using language in shaping social reality (Fairclough, 2012). The concept of discourse is often used to refer to meaning making in social processes, to refer to the language associated to a particular practice, and to refer to a method of construing parts of the world associated with a particular social perspective (Fairclough, 2005). Foucault (1971) suggests that the production of discourse in society is controlled, organised and allocated by some mechanisms which role is to limit its power, achieve the ability to harness its potential and elude its laborious, formidable materiality.

On social media, discourse is encompassed in the relationship between the expression (textual, pictorial, audio, video, links as well as the affordances of the mediating platform itself) and the content (Socio-cultural contextual situation) of the language used (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Jewitt, 2013; Lomborg, 2014; Wiggins & Bowers, 2015). Discourse is usually elaborated according to “*genre*” and within a “*register*” (Bhatia, 2015).

#### **b) *Genre***

There are many definitions for the concept of “*genre*”. However, in this research, it is understood to represent socially acknowledged classes of communication set up by a particular community in order to realise specific purposes (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Bhatia, 2015). According to that understanding, a genre is characterised by a “*communicative purpose*” or social rationale for creating and using the genre; a “*move structure*” or steps or stages needed in deploying the genre; and finally the “*rhetorical strategy*” in order to sail across influences and constrains choices of content and style, for online content audience usually made up of readers and browsers (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Swales, 1990). Genres are purposefully created by discourse communities sharing schemata or thought patterns that organise categories of information and relationship amongst these categories (Swales, 1990).

Genre represents articulatory conducts by which meaning is expressed. Bhatia (2015) suggests a model of overlapping levels of discourse representation where a genre stands between practice and text through which it is expressed (See Figure 2); proposing that genres are the pieces which connect discursive practices to text. However, social media content or digital content is generally multimodal (Text, image, audio, video and links) in addition of being influenced by the affordances of the platform considered for the dissemination of meaning throughout social networks (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Jewitt, 2013; Lomborg, 2014; Wiggins & Bowers, 2015). As such, “digital genres” or the genres that

are deployed on these platforms emerge out of the interaction at the intersection of existing genres and social media affordances (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Lomborg, 2014; Mussell, 2014).

As a consequence, after Bhatia (2015) and Fairclough (2012), it is understood in this research that the performance of social media discourse requires knowledge of and competence in the selection and use of contextually situated semantic patterns, and the deployment of moves and rhetorical strategies according to communication purposes. That competence in using genres allows manipulating registers' variables (Field, Tenor and Mode) according to socio-culturally identifiable thematic formations in order to generate meaning which readers could quickly grasp (Figueiredo, 2010).

**c) Registers**

Registers in this research describe the semiotic structures or the thematic pattern of meaning constituting a given text (Halliday, 1978). They are determined in this research using the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach to analyse text as part of critical discourse analysis as suggested by (Fairclough, 1992b, 2003). The systemic functional linguistics structure describes registers in terms of ideational (Field), interpersonal (Tenor) and textual (mode) meaning (Figueiredo, 2010). The *field* describes the event or social activity taking place about which the text was composed, usually construed in a transitive structure. The *tenor* describes the protagonists of a text as well as the relationship between them. The *mode* suggests the role and function of the text, and by so doing invokes the theme that is being transmitted. (See Table 3.2).

SFL is underpinned by an understanding that language use is functional and meant at making meaning within a particular Socio-cultural context by selecting and configuring specific thematic pattern of meaning (functional, semantic, contextual and semiotic) (Figueiredo, 2010; Halliday, 1978).

**Table 3.2: Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Figueiredo, 2010)**

CONTEXT OF SITUATION Contextual feature of discourse (situational determinant of text) Discourse community Register	SEMANTICS Linguistic meta-functions	LEXICO-GRAMMAR Clause level (Actor, Subject, theme)
Field: main social activity taking place	Ideational meanings	Transitivity structures Material processes Relational process Attributes Circumstances
Tenor: the people involved in it and their relationships	Interpersonal meanings	Modality structures Absence of modal markers Modulation
Mode: the roles and functions of the text within this social activity	Textual meaning (communicative purpose)	Thematic structure Causal conjunction Adversative conjunction

**d) Discourse on social media**

In summary, genres and registers can be viewed as signifiers, signifying Twitter™ posts (signified) aligning or misaligning with mainstream discourses deployed in the text availed on social media and

beyond; and referring to the underlying agential, socio-cultural, and technological reality and its behaviour. Language in use constitutes text with registers and genres structured according to the agential impetus, socio-cultural and technological conditioning of authors and readers, for its social shaping operationalization (Fairclough, 2012). Elements constituting discourse, genre and register considered in the study are suggested in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Elements of discourse practice, genre and register**

Discourse practice	Genre	Discourse register
Material resources	Communicative purpose	Field
Meaning	Move structure	Tenor
Competence	Rhetorical strategies	Mode

### 3.6.2 Social media language and semiotic content

The language used on social media is fluid and meaningfully complex and rich (Cenoz & Bereziartua, 2016; Florentini, 2013; Tagliamonte, 2016). That language uses enriched text to project meaning via unexpected genres and registers which intended recipients are expected to decrypt. The use of acronyms, short forms with words or phrases combination, and initialisms or homophone spelling, intensifiers with capital letters, punctuation and emotion words; future temporal reference, ideograms as “emojis and emoticons”; and misspellings and grammatical errors is common (Cenoz & Bereziartua, 2016; Florentini, 2013; Tagliamonte, 2016). The appropriate use of slang and multilingual registers is welcome. The assumption is that no one is there to look at the quality of your lingua franca.

The youth is at home here where the mastery of these fluid and complex language registers offers unlimited opportunities of combinations allowing to express the most antagonistic thoughts of influence, mobilisation, resistance and betterment.

Many have stressed the danger for lingua franca to be eroded by the practice of social media language; suggesting that it was the reason why students orthographic and grammatical conducts were waning in quality.

This is not a linguistics research into social media language, but rather a research into reasons behind SSA community members use of social media to act for change using language. The language in use or discourse is expected to provide the research with an access into authors’ *lifeworld* via an analysis of metalinguistic ideational, interpersonal and textual functions.

### 3.6.3 Hashtags, popularity and trendiness

**Hashtags** or (# tag) are keywords for crowdsourced labelling of social media content (Giglietto & Lee, 2017). They allow authors of content to attach their contributions to a topical thread as an ordering and optimal retrieval facilitation move. They have become a way to make “mini statements” like #feesmustfall or #jenesuispascharlie which carry specific meaning, highlight events and identify campaigns and movements, and work as rallying points for supporters and followers (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015). They are being used as a measure of trendiness and popularity of particular topics.

*Popularity* on social media is to be understood as a widely recognised and used statement, concept or practice amongst the users of a particular platform.

*Trendiness* on the other hand would refer to the spike in usage of a statement, concept or practice amongst the users of a particular social media platform due to its viral characteristics (Naaman, Becker, & Gravano, 2011). Trendiness is usually determined according to topic detection, emotion detection and sentiment analysis (Kahlert, Liebeck, & Cornelius, 2017). Topics, concepts or practice trend for a limited period then die out as audience interest and attention move to another topic.

On Twitter™, specific Hashtags appear referring to topics, concepts or practice which would be said *popular* when they become part of the discursive practice of the communication community; alternatively, when they would spike in usage they will be said to be *trending*. Popularity and trendiness on social media suggest alignment with a particular discourse.

### **3.6.4 Stereotypes and prejudice**

Discourse over social media tends to carry stereotypes (Barnett & Flynn, 2014; Herring & Kapidzic, 2015; Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015). Stereotypes can be understood as mental schema and intuitive generalisations about entities or groups or objects (Bordalo, Coffman, Gennaioli, & Shleifer, 2016). Stereotypes would stem from the survival need to identify friends from enemies, the ubiquitous difference in status hierarchy and competition for vital resources. They are shaped by social, cultural and agential relational emergent properties (Caprariello, Cuddy, & Fiske, 2009)

There are many conceptualisations of stereotypes in economics, social science and social-psychology. The research engages with a theorisation of stereotypes according to the *Stereotype Content Model (SCM)* by Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick (2008) for its ability to suggest a causal relationship between stereotypes and underlying structures, objects and mechanisms shaping them (Caprariello et al., 2009; Cuddy et al., 2009). Further, the SCM offers 4 main hypotheses: warmth and competence are the main dimensions of stereotypes; many out-groups are judged with ambivalent stereotypes, more positive on one dimension and less positive on another; group stereotypes are emergent from social structures; reference-groups favouritism (or preferring valued personal in-groups and societal prototypical groups) would be a more significant tendency in individualistic cultures in comparison to collectivist cultures.

According to the SCM (Cuddy et al., 2008, 2009), stereotypes content consider *warmth* and *competence* as the defining judgement scales of stereotypes. Warmth scales include good-nature, trustworthiness, tolerance, friendliness, and sincerity; while *Competence* scales include capability, skilfulness, intelligence, and confidence.

*First, across groups, stereotypes share common dimensions of content – warmth and competence. Second, many out-groups receive ambivalent stereotypes – more positive on one dimension and less positive on another. Third, group stereotypes follow from social structure: perceived status predicts competence stereotypes and perceived competitiveness predicts (lack of) warmth stereotypes (Cuddy et al., 2009, p.2)*

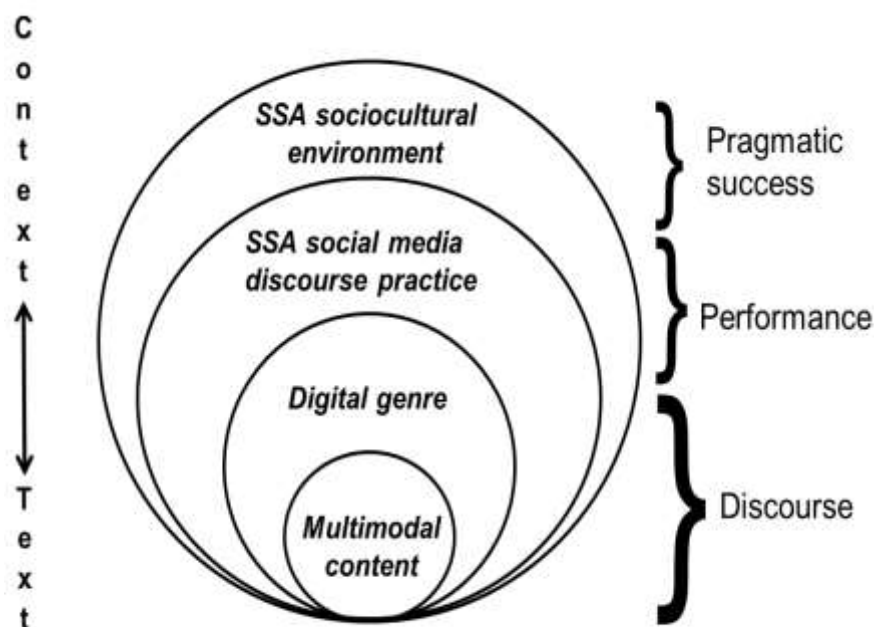
Stereotypes are used in social media discourse as meaning packages expression of Socio-cultural conditioning and agential impetus emergent properties. A change in their content is expected to signal a shift in the agency of authors of social media posts.

Prejudice denotes negative beliefs towards others or out-groups' envy or derogation. Prejudices are anchored on social and cultural differences among groups and expressed in ambivalent stereotyping. They can be blatant or subtle but will find a way to express themselves in the actions of an agent. There are envious and derogatory prejudices. Envious prejudice judges out-groups as *skilful but cunning*; while derogatory prejudice judges out-groups as *benevolent but incapable to compete* or *hostile and indolent in interaction* (Cuddy et al., 2008, 2009).

The salience of social identification due to heightened intergroup conflicts is accompanied with the emergence of stereotype consensus about in-group and out-group (Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999).

### 3.6.5 SSA social media discourse

Sub-Saharan African (SSA) social media discourse is understood in this research as a stratified socio-cultural practice producing social media content during social movements (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Bhatia, 2015; Fairclough, 2012). SSA social media content is multimodal (Text, image, audio, video and links) and implement existing SSA genres shaped by the affordances of the platform considered for the dissemination of meaning throughout social networks (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Bhatia, 2015; Jewitt, 2013; Lomborg, 2014; Wiggins & Bowers, 2015).



**Figure 3.2: Overlapping levels of social media discourse representation (Bhatia, 2015)**

As a consequence, it is expected that SSA community members' social media discourse during social movements would cover a certain number of registers structured according to various genres and

conveying ideologies, power and social influence; as per local Socio-cultural conditioning, social media platforms affordances and actor's agential impetus.

### **3.6.6 The spiral of silence in the public opinion on social media**

The spiral of silence is a theory in mass communication and political science suggesting that individuals' fear of social isolation leads them to remain silent instead of voicing their opinions when they differ or diverge from the dominant or public opinion (Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Stoycheff, 2016). Public opinion can be understood as the opinion which can be voiced in public without any fear of sanction and upon which action in public can be based (Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Stoycheff, 2016).

Noelle-Neumann (1974, p43) suggested 5 hypotheses to the interactive model of public opinion based on the spiral of silence:

- *“Individuals form a picture of the distribution of opinion in their social environment and of the trend of the opinion.*
- *Willingness to expose one's views publicly varies according the individual's assessment of the frequency distribution and the trend of opinions in his social environment.*
- *If the assessment of the current distribution of opinion and the actual distribution are clearly divergent, it is because the opinion whose strength is overestimated is displayed more in public.*
- *There is a positive correlation between the present and the future assessment. The weaker the correlation, the more public opinion is going through a process of change.*
- *If there is a divergence in the assessment of the present and future strengths of a particular view, it is the expectation of the future position which will determine the extent to which the individual is willing to expose himself.”*

The spiral of silence theory suggests that the medium of communication is a major factor that relates to both the dominant view and people's perception of the dominant view as it can influence that perception and by so doing cause people to maintain the real dominant view or to transform it.

The concept of the spiral of silence is used in this research as a generative mechanism that enables explaining the silence of the majority of social media users who never post anything or refrained from being explicit on particular subjects or events during social movements.

## **3.7 Usage of social media during social movements**

This section presents the usage of social media in social movements as it concerns individual citizens' and organised non-governmental and not for profit institutions in their attempts to respond to the demands of their *lifeworlds'* challenges, opportunities and their personal aspirations through social media mediated communication. Themes and concepts explored include some general use of social media, records of use of social media in social movements, use of social media for activism and journalism and the spiral of silence on social media.

### **3.7.1 The use of social media**

Social media are enjoying more and more important areas of use by individuals and organisations. For individuals, social media allow for connecting, interacting and exchanging with other people and organisations, improving the quality of ties and leveraging the potential of a connected society; while for organisations, they allow a broader and tighter reach to customers, partners and other market

stakeholders (Castells, 2011; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Johnston et al., 2013). They have also become significant features in health, disaster and emergency management, political activism and campaigning (Chance & Deshpande, 2009; Homeland Security, 2012; Slater, Keiko, & Kindstrand, 2013). Nevertheless, social media were also found to constrain their users into altering their conceptions of privacy to accommodate their networked nature (Marwick & Boyd, 2014).

### **3.7.2 Using social media in social movements**

Social media have become a major feature of social movements around the world. Examples such as the Arab Spring in Northern Africa and the Middle East (L. Anderson, 2011; Arafa & Armstrong, 2015; Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011; Khan, 2012) affirm the power of social media and the imperative to have a greater understanding of their workings and effects especially when it comes to social movements. Social media have become pervasive and invasive, with their penetration reaching the entire population of developed countries and over 80% of South African population. Such an empire makes of them the best tool for authorities to use in engaging with the majority of citizens and for avoiding losing touch with their needs and aspirations (City of Cape Town, 2009; OECD, 2009; RSA-DPLG, 2007b; Wattal et al., 2010; Williamson, 2013); especially during potentially wrecking social movements.

In this era of pervasive computing and global connectedness, the advent of convergence culture, citizen/participatory journalism and online activism seem to put an emphasis on and reflect actual online events influencing policy processes.

### **3.7.3 Social media Activism**

Social media activism can be understood as the use of social media in engaging and mobilising individuals for collective action in support of a cause (Christensen, 2011; Valenzuela, 2013). Social media has been at the forefront of the “occupy” movements around the world (Arab spring, Spain indignados, Occupy Wall street, Chile, Brazil, etc. ) (Juris, 2012). It was argued that the use of simplified narratives, popular symbols, and low risk activities enabled success in their use by activists (Lim, 2013).

Critique of social media activism suggest that such a practice is not much effective especially when considering the many cases attempted in comparison to the few successful cases (successful in mobilising crowds) reported. In addition, there are concerns about the fact that the whole social media environment is disparate and dominated by the global media system and the culture of consumerism that it carries through. Furthermore, there is also a problem with the fact that social media activism is bound to the techno-materiality of the access to social media; particularly with regard to the ICT infrastructure situation of sub-Saharan African countries (Lim, 2013).

### **3.7.4 Citizen and participatory journalism**

Citizen and participatory journalism refer (in this research) to ordinary citizens engaging in journalistic practices through user generated content (UGC) platforms which include social media platforms (Goode, 2009; Vujnovic et al., 2010). Social media are being used by citizens to provide other citizens with “news” as suggested by Castells (2007) with his concept of “mass self-communication”. Many

professional and mainstream journalist do not see much quality in terms of investigation, facts checking and accuracy in citizen journalism productions (Philips, 2010). Citizen Journalism seems to rely on sincerity and transparency to provide trustworthy information (Bonsón et al., 2012; Xin, 2010). However, there is an understanding that both professional and citizen journalism influence the political discourse, even though not in the same way; with professional journalism fostering political learning and citizen journalism fostering political engagement and mobilisation (Kaufhold et al., 2010).

Further, it is suggested that there is little knowledge about the influence of citizen journalism in developing countries (Xin, 2010); and that the political economy of participation in online news production and consumption need further exploration and re-conceptualisation (Vujnovic et al., 2010).

Participatory journalism is define as an activity in which citizens play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information (Borger, Van Hoof, Meijer, & Sanders, 2013).

This research is interested in the influence of citizen and participatory journalism during South African social movements; especially looking at its ability to foster political learning, engagement and mobilisation. Namely the research is interested in the entities, objects, structures and mechanisms which interactions has generated of the observed communicational practice of community members during social movements.

### **3.7.5 Networked publics**

Danah Boyd introduced a notion of *networked publics* to designate a type of public enabled by the use of ICTs as both virtual environments and imagine collectives (Boyd, 2008, 2010). She insisted that such public is characterised by four main properties derived from the affordances of SNS consisting in *persistence*, *searchability*, *replicability*, and *scalability*; and by 3 dynamic distorting effects on individuals using SNS including the salience of *invisible audiences*, *collapsed contexts*, and *the blurring of public and private* (Boyd, 2008, 2010). The notion of networked publics was constructed in the realm of cultural and media studies contemplating an audience as a group that both performs and is bound by a shared text. It challenges Habermas (1989) notion of a *public sphere* by including invisible audiences, mediatization, and all other aspects of social life (Boyd, 2008, 2010). This research is not about *publics* but about *networked publics* as a performance, as discourse projected from an emergent space of communication.

### **3.7.6 Black Twitter**

“Black Twitter” or “How black people use Twitter” is a social media phenomenon displaying a pattern of usage of the social media platform Twitter™ by Black people (Clarck, 2015; Graham & Smith, 2016; Manjoo, 2010). Black Twitter sheds a light on the Black experience by highlighting the identifiable “*ongoing social construction of a network of interlinked personal communities defined by their language, interest in common topics of conversation, and links forged through individual connections among personal communities and “high centers” around individuals with a large follow count*” which allows many people to individually contribute their own definitions and level of participation to the interactions of the ensemble (Clarck, 2015, p. 81). The American Black Twitter has

as themes of interest: relationships (especially between black men and women), celebrity news and entertainment, physical health and social justice (Clarck, 2015). Black twitter is suggested to have a transformative character and to be constituted by a social communal identity, thematic nodes and Black Twitter Meta-network (Clarck, 2015). Black Twitter can be characterised as an emergent site or space of transformative negation (Bhaskar, 2008b), an instance of networked publics (Boyd, 2008, 2010) and a “digital *counterpublic*” (Hill, 2018).

The phenomenon is suggested to have started in the USA with African-Americans in 2009 and has become mainstream in South Africa in 2012. The South African experience of Black Consciousness though, has made of Black Twitter an eclectic intellectual realm engaging social, economic, political, technological or environmental topics in depth through sometimes “twitter wars” with elites or celebrities displaying ignorance or bigotry in their statements on the platform (Masemola, 2015; Sosibo, 2015).

### **3.7.7 The Anonymous**

Anonymous is a *hacktivist* social movement which came to be known from their support to WikiLeaks in 2010 and the various distributed denial of services (DDoS) attacks they orchestrated against various private or government affiliated entities (Fuchs, 2013; Goode, 2015). Their ideological paradigm was estimated to be “rhizomatic”, fluid, both nihilist and idealist, and somewhat cyberlibertarian (Goode, 2015). Anonymous is a new social movement opposing and resisting state and corporate social control. The anonymous carries the properties of networked publics (See section 3.7.5) as digital *counterpublic* resisting a hegemon through the negation of its power and control.

## **3.8 Extant theories for the emergent usage of social media during social movements**

The emergent usage of social media understood as the emergent practice of discourse on social media during SSA social movements is a social phenomenon expected to be underpinned by local socio-cultural relational emergent properties interacting with each other, with social media affordances and with community members’ agencies, and generating the messages experienced on these online platforms. These underpinnings (real objects, entities and their interactions) are reputed unobservable though causally efficacious, relatively autonomous and enduring.

The research was not able to find a satisfactory extant theoretical framework able to provide a realist explanation of the phenomenon studied. Extant theories considered included the TCA (Habermas, 1984), TMSPM (Preece & Shneiderman, 2009) SCT (Bandura, 2001) or Mediatization theory (Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2015; Hjarvard, 2012; Lepa, Hoklas, & Weinzierl, 2014). They assume a linear semiosis and would have had issues looking at signification in terms of conceptual *distanciation* like Bhaskar (2008a) or more radically as one facet in asignifying semiotics as would have suggested Genosko (2014) or DeLanda (2012). Another issue was related to the fact that they were not explaining ICT mediated discursive activities including the technology, agency and socio-cultural conditioning contributions.

As a consequence, the research has recourse to the theoretical abduction of concepts and propositions from these frameworks, models and theories, to develop a guiding conceptual framework (Beirlaen & Aliseda, 2014; Magnani, 2004; Schurz, 2008). The systematic process of selection and combining of relevant existing theories, models and concepts was realised using thought experiments operations generating a logical and objective hypothesis with greater chances of sustaining empirical corroboration based on natural necessities (Judgemental rationality) (Danermark et al., 2002; Dubois & Gadde, 2002, 2014; Spens & Kovács, 2006).

### **3.8.1 Technology-mediated Social Participation model: The reader-to-leader framework**

Preece & Shneiderman (2009) offer the reader-to-leader framework to assist researchers and practitioners understand what motivates technology-mediated social participation. The framework is derived from empirical observation suggesting that users of online platform occupy online roles ranging from reader to leader and could transition from one role to the next one depending on the socio-technological conditions. The model emphasizes *usability* (perceived affordances) and *sociability* (embedded social structures) as socio-technological aspects attached to every role taken up by a user, implying that they would have a significant influence in motivating a user to transition from one role to another.

The model suggests 4 major roles in online user engagement:

- i) **Reader:** In this role, the user is rather passive, with actions limited to venturing in, reading, browsing, searching, and returning;
- ii) **Contributor:** In this role, the user actively contributes to the content by rating, tagging, reviewing, posting, and uploading content;
- iii) **Collaborator** – In this role, users develop relationships, exchange knowledge, set goals and work together in generating content;
- iv) **Leader:** In this role, the user takes on the governance of social interactions by promoting participation, mentoring novices, setting and upholding policies.

The reader-to-leader framework was criticized for lacking clarity as to how users transition from reader to leader (Kokkodis & Lappas, 2016).

This model offers specific roles which social media users involved in social movements in SSA may animate in accordance with their agential powers.

### **3.8.2 Social cognitive theory (SCT)**

This research is concerned with the change or not in agential capacity of community members as they use social media to carry influential messages.

Bandura (1986) developed the social cognitive theory emphasising the reciprocal causation in the interplay of cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors. Social cognitive theory is concerned with the role of the cognitive, vicarious, self-reflective and self-regulatory processes in psychosocial functioning. Social cognitive theory describes human agency through 4 core features: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness. With these features the understanding of

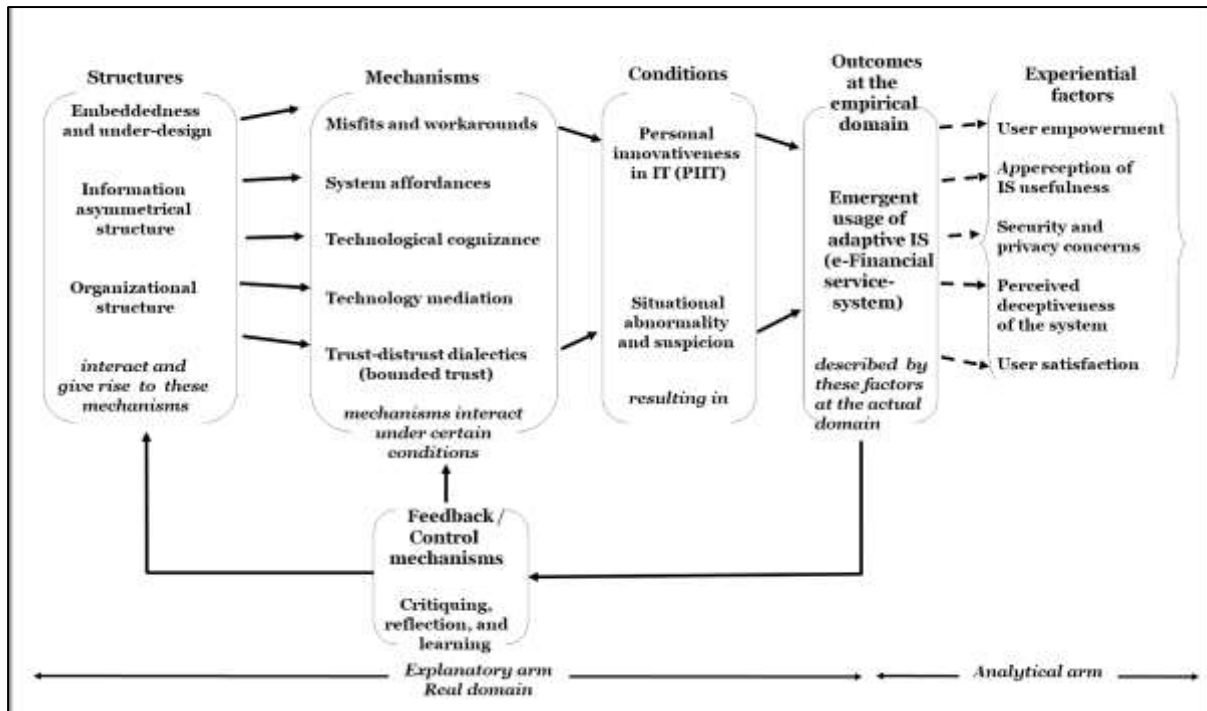
human agency seems to align with CR explanation structural impingement, intentionality, reflectivity, self-consciousness and creativity (See section 3.9.5).

However, SCT definition of human agency does not see human agency as *collectivities* bearing the same life chances; SCT aligns with the *conflationist* explanation of the relationship of structures and agency from Giddens's (1984) structuration theory; and SCT rejects analytical dualism and the layering of identity (Bandura, 1999). As a consequence, SCT is not a Critical Realist theory and is not useful in investigating unobservable, relatively enduring and autonomous phenomena. Nevertheless, its description of human agency observable features suggests that CR explanation is in the right track for a better explanation of the reality of human agency powers.

### **3.8.3 Technology Emergent Usage Model (TEUM)**

The emergent usage of ICTs can be understood as a set of use behaviours arising from the interaction between an ICT artefact and individuals within a specific social context. These behaviours are expected to be rooted in the interaction between agential impetus and ICT artefacts as individuals interact and navigate their social worlds.

The Technology Emergent Usage Model (TEUM) represents a critical realist mechanistic causal explanation of the emergent usage of ICTs (Ononiwu, 2015). TEUM offers a vertical explanation (Throughout CR ontological layers) of the apparition of unexpected use of an IS. TEUM suggests that a user of an IS, understood as a complex adaptive system, would experience empowerment and satisfaction despite concerns over the potential deceptiveness, security and privacy concerns; enabled by his/her personal innovativeness and situational challenges and opportunities. These enabling conditions are suggested to have been created by a range of dynamic mechanisms including "Misfits and workarounds", "System affordances", "technological cognizance", "Technology mediation" and "Trust-distrust dialectics" (Ononiwu, 2015). These mechanisms would be causally related to 3 enabling structures of systemic influence: embeddedness and under-design, information asymmetrical structure, and organisational structure.



**Figure 3.3: Technology Emergent Usage Model (TEUM) (Ononiwu, 2015)**

The TEUM model is not clear about the workings of agency. TEUM refers to agency through “*control mechanisms*” and “*personal innovativeness*”; but not as the reflexive mediator by which social mechanisms and structures express their powers. Further, the model is not clear about the spatial and temporal rhythmic presiding as a kind of inertia to systemic transformation or reproduction as contingencies (contradictory or complementary) to complex adaptive or autopoietic systems occur. The TEUM will come handy in this research as it provides a connection between the experience of social media discourse authors’ and the conditions of their situation as they transform, especially by suggesting the type of Socio-cultural emergent properties to investigate.

### 3.8.4 Mediatization theory

Mediatization is understood in this research as an emergent property of relationship at the nexus of interaction between socio-cultural systemic powers, social media and SSA community members agential impetus (Hepp et al., 2015; Hjarvard, 2012; Lepa et al., 2014). As such, mediatization is actualised over a communication space, at a moment when *alternative socio-cultural embeddedness and technological under-designs* within the artefact are activated by a user exploiting discovered *social media affordance*; and may enable (in varying intensity or not) *innovation or constraining misfits and workarounds* for an *agential impetus* grounded in the local socio-cultural systemic condition (Hepp et al., 2015; Hjarvard, 2012; Lepa et al., 2014; Ononiwu, 2015).

Mediatization is a concept and a theory in media and communication studies and represents a paradigm shift within these fields of research as a way of looking at media not in terms of textual, audience or political economic analysis, but in terms of an autonomous and causally efficacious social structure able to cause social and cultural change (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Hepp et al., 2015; Hjarvard, 2008). Mediatization theory frames a *media-centred* process by which the medium of

communication, the practice of communication, and the environment in which communication takes place are shaped (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Hepp et al., 2015; Jansson, 2013). It's a theory that proposes to investigate and analyse the interrelated influences of the changing media and the changing Socio-cultural environment within which they are used (Couldry & Hepp, 2013). As a concept, it refers to a meta-process of change involving various amalgamations of socially and culturally transformed and historically embedded micro-processes of social life (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Jansson, 2013). Schulz (2004) suggested analytical categories including relay function, semiotic function and economic function in the determination of technological Mediatization. These categories can be teased out of data in determining the effect of social media on individuals and on socio-cultural systems. Mediatization theory implies the need for a processual methodological approach which may help to determine the generative mechanisms of communicative events through space and time (Hepp et al., 2015). Mediatization theory is underpinned by social constructivist, critical social theory (Jensen, 2013) and socio-materialist (potentially Critical and agential realist) assumptions which could accommodate critical realist ideas of emergence and analytical dualism.

Mediatization was also introduced as a socio-spatial concept. Jansson (2013) suggests that mediatised textures of social space are at the nexus of socio-spatial regimes of dependence including material indispensability and adaptation (perceived space), pre-mediation of experience (conceived space) and normalization of social practice (lived space). Social media and their carrying devices are considered indispensable by their users who accommodate it (adaptation) by creating room for it in their lives; Social media make people to expect most relevant news to come through their favourite platforms and they are predisposed to share it with their network; Social media are becoming the best place for organisations to interact with their customers. This understanding of mediatization allows looking at interaction over social media as a foundation for dialectical social spaces.

The concept and theory of Mediatization offer the possibility to investigate the interplay of media (here social media) with Socio-cultural conditioning, agential impetus and technology affordances as discourse is carried throughout society during social movement. In other words, with regards to this research, mediatization holds the answers to the question to know how social media as a medium of communication contributes in the shaping of discourse, the environment of discourse and its own transformation.

### **3.8.5 Theory of communicative action (TCA)**

The use of social media during social movements can be considered a communicative action or a process through which social actions are performed in order to control "lifeworld" situations (Lebenswelt - individually construed socio-cultural environment – private and public spheres) (Mabovula, 2010). That concept is derived from the Theory of Communicative Action (TCA) proposed by the German philosopher Jurgen Habermas (1984, 1987). The TCA suggests that communication events take place within a context allowing for the constitution of a communication space within which actors can gently, equally and freely exchange valid statements. The TCA offers 4 principal layers in a communicative event: the discourse, aspects of the discourse, its validity claims, and its context. It

also offers four main aspects of intentional behaviour by social actors: instrumental, communicative, discursive, and strategic:

- *Instrumental action* is a behaviour that seeks to achieve a rational objective;
- *Communicative action* is a behaviour that seeks achieving and maintaining mutual understanding amongst the actors involved in a social movement coordinated situation;
- *Discursive action* is a negotiating behaviour oriented toward achieving or restoring agreement and redeeming validity claims in preparation of joint actions; and
- *Strategic action* is concerned with an actor's use of power over others in order to realise its desires or goals (Ngwenyama & Lee, 1997).

Communicative and discursive actions seek to establish understanding while Instrumental and strategic actions aim at successfully achieving particular objectives.

The TCA posits that these social actions need to conform to specific validating norms in order to avoid communication breakdown or incomprehension. These *validity claims* include: completeness, truthfulness, sincerity, clarity/comprehensibility, contextuality/appropriateness for *action establishing an understanding* amongst involved actors; and contextuality/appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness for *actions seeking success*. It is to note here that these validity claims seem to share similar scales with the Stereotypes Content Model (SCM) for warmth (good-nature, trustworthiness, tolerance, friendliness, and sincerity) and performance (capability, skilfulness, intelligence, and confidence) dimensions (see section 3.6.4) characterising one perception of others. Further, Habermas' TCA comprehends a notion of "*ideal speech situation*" where intervening rational actors enjoy freedom of assembly, association and expression; equal knowledge of the subject matter; and enough resources to hold on to their promises (Adler, Forbes, & Willmott, 2007; Graham & Smith, 2016). There is also a notion of "*public sphere*" understandable as an instance or order of *lifeworld* constituted by communicative networks of actors enhanced by a socio-cultural complex and media (Habermas, 1987). A public sphere is expected to operate in a space where freedom of assembly, association and expression is guaranteed in order to generate public opinion. It stresses open discussion and pursuit of public will and good. However, cases like that are rather exclusive to a dominating group, keeping at bay people and groups that do not belong. That implies a need for a concept of "*public sphere*" that includes alternative views; that is a dialectical space where idealistic and bourgeois notions of equality and freedom are brought down to be processes of negotiation for assembly, association and expression in generating a public opinion in pursuit of real public will and public good (Boyd, 2010; Calhoun, 1992; Fraser, 1990; Graham & Smith, 2016). Also, The TCA is a theory of social interaction from a critical social theory philosophical tradition which is not compatible with critical realism at an ontological level.

In the case of this research, social media platforms could be seen as instantiations of social and political *public spheres*, where rational and intentional actions for understanding or success are performed by informed actors involved in South African social movements. This research contends that communication events would take place in a constituted communication space within which actors negotiate and persuade or align with one another in pursuit of better lived experiences. The discourse that is projected in such events is never equal nor that much valid, but it carries experiences and aspirations, and it is out to impact society.

### **3.8.6 Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach**

The Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (Archer, 1995) offers a critical realist explanatory framework and a realist social theory. These aspects may be used in proposing explanations that accounts of the changes which resulted into social media being used as a “*space of transformative negation*” during sub-Saharan African social movements (See section 3.9).

## **3.9 Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach as a realist social theory and an explanatory theoretical framework**

This section introduces the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic (M/M) approach and its causal explanatory framing potential. The M/M approach is used in this research as a realist social theory able to explain social context from a critical realism perspective, and as an explanatory framework able to provide a processual causal account of emergence.

### **3.9.1 M/M approach: Realist social theory and Explanatory framework**

#### **a) *M/M approach as a realist social theory***

The morphogenetic approach is a critical realist social theory proposed by British sociologist Margaret S. Archer (1995). The Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (M/M approach) describes a dialectical relation between structure and agency within social phenomena and advocates an analytical ontological distinction between agency on the one hand and social and cultural relational emergent properties on the other hand (analytical dualism) (Njihia & Merali, 2013; Porpora, 2013). Archer et al. (1998, p206) argues that “*social forms are a necessary condition for any intentional act, that their pre-existence establishes their autonomy as possible objects of scientific investigation and that their causal power establishes their reality*”. The M/M approach holds that there are a variety of relational emergent properties (structural, cultural and agential) which are irreducible to one another, have relative autonomy and are relatively enduring (Archer, 1995 p175).

In morphogenetic sense, social change can be explained with the dialectical relation between human agency and the socio-cultural conditions in which the agents find themselves into; these conditions include social structures, cultures and some physical objects (Porpora, 2013). *Structures* refer to particular emergent properties within social actors relationships including power, influence, dependency, exploitation; *culture* is the collective emergent product of actors through interaction with one another and with structures; while agency is an emergent property of human actors characterised by reflexivity and intentionality (Archer, 1995).

#### **b) *M/M approach as an explanatory framework***

The morphogenetic approach refers to transformation (morphogenesis) and reproduction (morphostasis) of social forms (social structure, culture and agency) in a cyclical mode inspiring the morphogenetic cycle. As such, the morphogenesis of structure and culture suggest that agents act within their structural and cultural circumstances or conditions (those are prior to their existence from a time T1 over a T2 period of time dedicated to social-cultural interaction, towards sustaining or

altering these conditions through a process of socio-cultural elaboration completed at a time T4 (Archer, 1995).

The explanatory format consists in providing *analytical histories of emergence* (Archer, 1995 p327, 2007a). The 3 parts of the analytical narrative consist of:

- “Structural conditioning” by distribution of *resources*, of *life chances*, of *vested interest* and of *bargaining power* which are mediated to agents situationally;
- “Social interaction” as conditioned by the former, by other structural factors which also impinge on agents, by *social affinities* and *antagonism* between them, and ultimately by the *reflexive monitoring* of an inalienably innovative agency;
- “Structural elaboration” is quintessentially dependent upon how (or whether) in the precise combination of *conditioning* and *contingency*, *bargaining power* is converted into *negotiating strength* between corporate agents.

The M/M approach is used in this research as a causation framework helping to explain the emergence of South African community members social media discourse.

### **3.9.2 Propositions of the M/M approach.**

The Morphogenetic/Morphostatic (M/M) (Archer, 1995) approach holds that:

- 1- There are internal and necessary relations within and between relational emergent properties
- 2- Causal influences are exerted by relational emergent properties on social interaction (SI)
- 3- There are causal relationships between groups and individuals at the level of SI
- 4- SI elaborates upon the composition of relational emergent properties by modifying current internal and necessary structural, cultural or agential relationships and introducing new ones where morphogenesis is concerned. Alternatively, SI reproduces existing internal and necessary structural, cultural or agential relationships when Morphostasis is concerned.
- 5- Agents are the efficient cause of actions
- 6- Relational emergent properties mediate agential undertakings by providing reasons for action

### **3.9.3 Analytical dualism**

The M/M approach describes analytical dualism as a dialectical relation between structure and agency within social phenomena and advocates an analytical ontological distinction between agency on the one hand and social and cultural relational emergent properties on the other hand (Porpora, 2013). Analytical dualism is possible because of the pre-existence of social forms (structural and cultural) over the changes which may affect them; suggesting that the relationship between structures and agency is usually asynchronous (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 1993). The M/M approach holds that

there are a variety of relational emergent properties (structural, cultural and agential) which are irreducible to one another, have relative autonomy and are relatively enduring (Archer, 1995 p175).

### 3.9.4 Level of analysis of the M/M approach

The M/M approach account of 4 social levels of analysis: the “social position or situation” (privileged or underprivileged) determined by 1<sup>st</sup> order structures (First-order Emergent Properties - FEP); “social roles” understood as prior definition of obligations, sanctions and interests, and entailing necessary and internal relationships with resources and rules; “institutional level” pertaining to social integration and “System level” constituting a prominent and specific social feature (Archer, 1995). Social roles and institutions constitute a 2<sup>nd</sup> order structural level, while systems with social-cultural interaction and socio-cultural elaboration are 3<sup>rd</sup> order structural level.

System integration refers to the orderly or conflictual relations between the parts of any social system while social integration refers the orderly or conflictual relations between social actors (Archer, 1995; Willmott, 2000). Structural orders are necessarily and internally related to one another within a particular area and point in time.

**Table 3.4: Level of analysis of the M/M approach (Archer (1995))**

System Integration	Relationship	Social Integration
Systemic level (3 <sup>rd</sup> order structures - Macro)	Interplay	Population
Institutional level (2 <sup>nd</sup> order structures - Meso)	Interplay	Organized groups (corporate agency)
Social roles (2 <sup>nd</sup> order structures)	Interplay	Individual actors (corporate agency)
Social position or situation (1 <sup>st</sup> order structures - Micro) - FEP	Interplay	Collectivities (primary agency)

### 3.9.5 M/M approach to Agency

Agency is an emergent property of human actors characterised by Self-consciousness, self-monitoring, reflexivity, creativity and intentionality (Archer, 1995).

There are 2 types of agents: primary agents and corporate agents (Archer, 2003, 2007a). *Primary agents* are groups that are interest governed rather than rules governed lacking a say in cultural and structural modelling. *Corporate agents* are articulated, and organised groups involved in decision making or in cultural and structural modelling. They include: self-conscious vested interest groups, promotive interest groups, social movements and defensive associations.

The Morphogenesis/Morphostasis of agency is the result of exchange and power between primary and corporate agents (Archer, 2007a).

**a) Reflexivity, internal conversation and intentionality**

**Reflexivity** can be defined as the mental capacity of all normal people to consider or deliberate about themselves in relation to their social context and their social context in relation to themselves (Archer, 2007a). Central to reflexivity is the concept of internal conversation as a process which discerns, deliberates and dedicates for future life courses. **Internal conversations** constitute a dialectic between our human concerns and our emotional commentaries upon them (Archer, 2000, 2003). As a consequence, Reflexivity involves emotional and rational evaluation and commitment.

Archer (2007a) proposes that at any moment in time the majority of people reflexive ability falls in one of 4 modes of reflexivity which develop via internal conversation or the interplay of people’s context and their concerns (Archer, 2003; De Vaujany, 2008; Lockett & Lockett, 2009). These modes of reflexivity are:

- *Fractured reflexives* (dysfunctional internal conversation preventing purposeful action and reproducing structural conditioning),
- *Communicative reflexives* (Internal conversation is established from internal conversation, purposefully ignore social enablement and agents for social reproduction),
- *Autonomous reflexives* (self-sufficient internal conversation, rational and purposeful action and agents for social change) and
- *Meta-reflexives* (value oriented internal conversation, self-transcendence and agents for social change)

The reflexive capability establishes or construes a social actor’s subjective future course of action or pathway to life or *modus vivendi* throughout the 3 orders of natural reality (nature, practice and social); as well as reasons for engaging that course (Archer, 2007a; Dobson, Jackson, & Gengatharen, 2013).

Reflexivity depends upon embodied, practical and discursive knowledge as the subject relates to nature, practice and society respectively in terms of coordination, compliance and commitment (Archer, 2010b) (See Table 3.5).

**Intentionality** as a disposition to act, emerges from emotionalised reflexivity out of concern about the relationship of self and the various attributes of natural, practical and social orders (Archer, 2007a, 2012).

**Table 3.5: Types of knowledge and the three orders of natural reality (Archer (2010))**

<b>Orders of reality</b>	<b>Natural Order</b>	<b>Practical Order</b>	<b>Social Order</b>
Relationship type	Object/Object	Subject/Object	Subject/Subject
Knowledge Type	Embodied	Practical	Discursive
Emergent From	Coordination	Compliance	Commitment
Importance of Reflexivity	Minimal	Moderate	Maximal

This research is interested in the change in agential impetus and makes use of modes of reflexivity and levels of intentionality in determining the change which took place.

### **b) *Self-consciousness and Self-monitoring***

The sense of “self” or self-consciousness is estimated prior and primitive to our sociality. Its realisation comes about through the necessary relation between embodied practice and the non-discursive environment (Archer, 2010b; Lockett & Lockett, 2009). Archer (2010) suggests that the sense of self is continuous throughout human life and necessarily implies the existence of the ability to continually sense oneself as much as others, in a process of self-monitoring. The M/M approach of Agency sees human beings as subjects able to see themselves as objects and as stratified in self, person, agent and actors.

### **c) *Creativity***

Creativity in the sense of this research can be understood as the ability to use the discovery of a systemic opportunity to devise novel courses of action (Martin & Wilson, 2016). Creativity is a causal power of a person that uses accessed knowledge to devise new knowledge or to innovate in natural, practical and social terms. For the case of this research, creativity is expected to be displayed in the metaphorical and metonymical manipulation of genres and registers as part of SSA community members’ social media discourse during social movement (P. A. Lewis, 1996).

### **3.9.6 Proposition of the M/M of Agency**

10 basic propositions of the M/M of agency (Archer, 1995 pp264-266):

1. *“All agents are not equal. At the start of each cycle, corporate agents are delineated by an initial distribution of structural and cultural properties.*
2. *Corporate agents maintain/remodel the socio-cultural system and its institutional parts: primary agents work within them*
3. *All agents are not equally knowledgeable because of the effect of prior interaction upon them*
4. *All change is mediated through alteration (context or operational environment) in agents (respectively primary and corporate agent) situations*
5. *The categories of corporate and primary agents are redefined over time through interaction in pursuit of social stability or change*
6. *Actions by corporate and primary agents constrain and enable one another*
7. *Action by primary agents constitute atomistic reaction, uncoordinated co-action or associational interaction depending upon the extent of their participation in a given institutional context*
8. *Interaction of corporate agents generates emergent properties: actions of primary agents produce aggregate effects*
9. *The elaboration of social agency (societal and sectional) consists of the shrinkage of the category of the primary agents who become incorporated and transformed into corporate agents, thus swelling this category.*
10. *Social change is the resultant of aggregate effects produced by primary agents in conjunction with emergent properties generated by corporate agents and thus does not approximate to what anyone wants”*

### **3.9.7 M/M approach to Personal and Social identity**

According to Archer (1995, 2000, 2007b), the M/M approach distinguishes between human being made up of the **self** and the **person** endowed with self-consciousness, self-monitoring, reflectivity, creativity and intentionality, and from which the *personal identity* emerges; the **social agent** as

endowed *collectivities* sharing the same life chances (primary and corporate agents); and the **social actor** that carries the personal identity and the conditioning agent of the individual into a social role (Archer, 1995 p249) (See Table3.6). These 4 entities represent dialectical strata of an individual subject taking up a social role (Archer, 2000).

Archer (2000) suggests that every human being has a continuous sense of self constituted by self-consciousness and intentionality, which informs his/her conceptualisation of self in response to the encounter with nature, practice and society via *internal conversation*. That emergent concept of self represents a subject's **personal identity**. Archer (2000) continues by suggesting that socio-cultural emergent properties impact the "self" and the "personal identity" to elaborate *social agents*. Social actors emerge from agents upon finding a befitting social role to occupy. This process culminates with actors acquiring a **social identity** from the way in which they personify or incarnate or animate the role they have chosen to occupy.

**Table 3.6: Layers of social identity (Archer (1995, 2000, 2007, 2010))**

<b>Real entity</b>	<b>Power</b>
Actor	Carries the personal identity and the conditioning agent of the individual into a social role
Socio-cultural Agent (primary or corporate) (social identity)	Collectivities sharing the same life chances
Person with Personal identity	reflexivity, creativity and intentionality
Self	Self-consciousness, self-monitoring, Relative autonomy, pre-existence and causal efficacy

### **3.9.8 Aspects of structural mediation**

The workings of a social structure can be identified after aspects of structural mediation including (Archer, 1995 pp201-208):

- Unvoluntaristic placement: Deposit of 1<sup>st</sup> order SEP and CEP
- Grouping in vested Interest: Means by which SEPs and CEPs exert conditional influence on subsequent actions (e.g.: Forming groups of people directly receiving substantial material benefits from particular institution or social structure)
- Degree of interpretative freedom: Capability to exert reflexivity upon structural conditioning - reasons
- Opportunity cost: (different groups have different degree of freedom and face different constraints when they contemplate the same project from their different positions)
- Directional guidance for strategic action represents influence provided by 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> order SEPs & CEPs.

Socio-cultural interaction is explained by Bargaining power, Negotiation strength, transformational / reproductive power and the recalling of relative autonomy of SEP, CEP and PEP (Archer, 1995).

### 3.9.9 The morphogenetic cycle

Emergence in social outcomes is the results of the interaction between social (structural) and cultural realms – material resources and ideas – mediated by agents. The *morphogenetic cycle* operationalizes the concept of analytical dualism to elucidate the causes of social change. Structural cultural and agential emergent properties

#### a) *The morphogenesis of structure and culture*

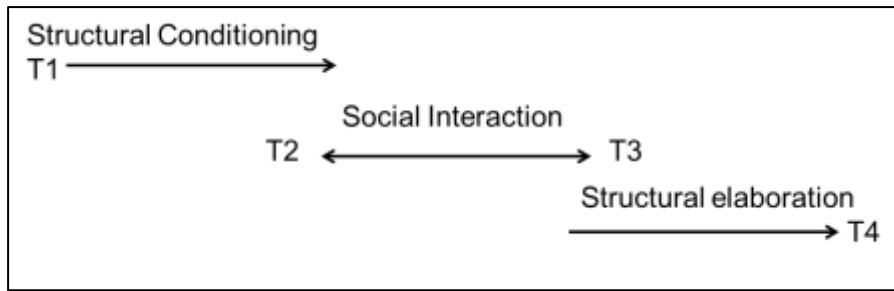
Systemic Structural Emergent Properties (SEPs) and Cultural Emergent Properties (CEPs) (considered as “structures”) necessarily predate any social actor; hence agents can only transform them but cannot create them. That allows performing temporal analytical separation between structures and agency as Emergence – Interplay – Outcome stages of the cycle. Analysis is performed over distinct time intervals to ascertain emergent changes in structures, cultures and people. SEPs, CEPs and PEPs are assessed separately in time over each analytical cycle.

**Conditioning** consists in the distribution of life chances, resources, bargaining power and vested interest defining a social position.

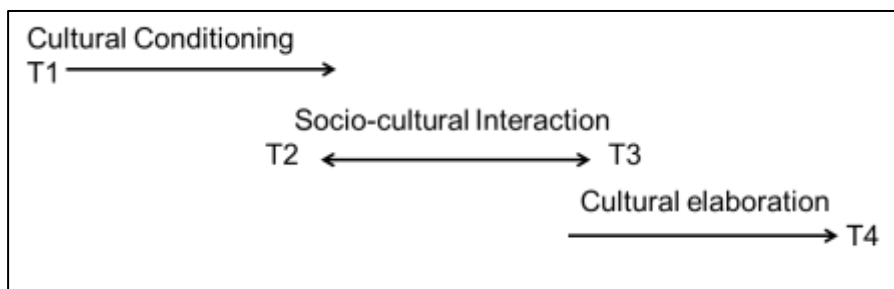
**Interaction** consists in bringing to the engagement space, agents’ resources, social positioning, the impingement (enablement and constrains) of other structural factors, social affinities (superimposition (compatibility and complementarity) or antagonism (incompatibility and contradiction)) and innovative reflexivity, in order to overcome the *opportunity cost* required in *exchange transactions and power relation* with the aim of attaining particular outcomes.

**Elaboration** resulting from the engagement with others is expected to turn *bargaining power* into *negotiating strength*, during resource redistribution and the transformation of primary agents into corporate agents.

Diagrams 3.3 and 3.4 below illustrate the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic cycles for structure and culture. Each cycle starts at a time T1 which corresponds to the prior social conditioning (Distribution of life chances, wealth, sanctions and expertise) by the existing configuration of components in social reality. The intermediate period T2 to T3 corresponds to the mediating action of agency causing social or socio-cultural interaction. Emergent production or reproduction leads to structural and cultural elaboration by time T4.



**Figure 3.4: Morphogenesis/Morphostasis of Structure**



**Figure 3.5: Morphogenesis/Morphostasis of Culture**

During analysis, these time periods are empirically identified from a historical account of events marking significant contingent influence on relevant social forms. The analysis of interaction is concerned with determining which agents benefited the most and the less in the changing resource distribution on transaction between vested interest groups.

**b) The morphogenesis of agency (People Emergent Properties - PEP)**

Agents, defined as *collectivities* sharing the same *life chances* (Archer, 1995: 257) try to get the best of their situation by organising in vested interest groups of material or idealistic orientation for social and socio-cultural interaction. Primary agents organised in interest groups through *promotive* or *defensive* movements or associations can affect policy decision making, as corporate agents do, resulting in structural and cultural modelling. Another result of these actions is the variation (shrinkage and increase) in the size of the groups of primary and corporate agents. Success for any group of agents is dependent on the availability of material resources and on the relationship with other corporate agents

The morphogenesis of agency follows the transformation schema person → agent → actor. Individual *persons* are first transformed into primary and corporate agents (depending on social positioning) in a *double morphogenesis* (social reality changes then the *person* change in adapting to it). Agents become actors after a *triple morphogenesis* when they step in a *social role* within the social system. Actors originate from corporate agency and can operate the shaping of structure and culture.

Structural manipulation is linked to agency through reflexivity executing *internal conversations*. As such, when a person considers their social position, evaluates options, and makes choices in relation

to objective social reality he/she is making use of reflexivity with the aim of manipulating Socio-cultural structures (Archer, 2003).

Modes of reflexivity differ with people and are foundational to social change. With reference to social transformation, autonomous and meta-reflexives would be agents of change while communicative and fractured reflexives would be agents of structural reproduction.

### **3.9.10 Limitations of the M/M approach**

The M/M approach is a critical realist theoretical contribution. It is suggested to present limitations (Archer, 2007b, 2012; Njihia, 2008; Ononiwu, 2015):

- The M/M approach is a processual and historical explanation of emergence that does not provide for the determination of a specific generative mechanism
- the M/M approach does not provide for a complete vertical analysis throughout critical realism ontological strata. It focuses on actual and real domains and does not extend to empirical domains.
- M/M approach does not provide for Technology emergent properties (e.g.: Artificial intelligence).

### **3.10 Research conceptual framework**

This section describes the development and presents the conceptual framework driving the research towards a critical realist explanation of the phenomenon studied. The phenomenon examined in this research is a social practice generating discourse on social media platforms during social movements in sub-Saharan Africa. The phenomenon is understood as emerging from the interaction of Socio-cultural emergent properties, people emergent properties and social media affordances. The research thence considers a Socio-cultural dimension concerned with South African communities social and cultural trajectories; Community members agency, skills and relationships; a technology dimension where social media mediate communications as per their affordances and functionalities; and a dimension of the relationship between social movements actors and social media as they use them during social movements (Castells, 2011, 2015). Such a theoretical framework is expected to be able to describe and explain the agential change which led to the emergence of the observed discourse on social media.

The review of the literature could not suggest any theory or model able to causally and processually explain the phenomenon under research, meaning the timely trajectory of the shape of the social practice of discourse by South African community members during social movements. As a consequence, a theoretical abduction approach that devises a prior framework from selected relevant concepts and extant theories was deployed.

It consisted in the systematic process of selection and combining of relevant extant theories, models, frameworks and concepts using thought operations generating a logical and objective hypothesis with greater chances of sustaining empirical corroboration based on natural necessities (Danermark et al., 2002; Dubois & Gadde, 2002, 2014; Spens & Kovács, 2006).

The extant theories examined included the Technology mediated social participation model reader-to-leader framework, the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), Technology Emergent Usage Model (TEUM), the mediatization theory, the Theory of Communicative Action (TCA), and Relational and Computer Mediated Communication (RCMC) and the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic socio-technical approach. These theories, models and frameworks were considered because of their relevance to the communication practice of discourse. They presented various limitations preventing them from being selected as the *prior* conceptual framework of this research including focussing on particular aspects of the phenomenon, displaying epistemic fallacy, or being unreconcilable with CR social ontology.

### **3.10.1 Theories and theory development in Information systems**

#### **a) *Definitions of Theory***

The need to produce theory is one of the most important trepidations of scientific inquiry (Mueller & Urbach, 2013; Sewchurran & Brown, 2011). Critical realism suggests that theory is the language that makes science possible (Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2008a). Danermark et al (2002) argues that theory is a language of abstraction indispensable to science and through which scientific activities (categorising, analysing, understanding, explaining, etc.) are possible; Theory thus serves as interpretative framework conceptualising phenomena with reference to particular aspects separated from other aspects of concrete phenomena. Weber (2012) describes theory as a sort of model accounting of some aspects of phenomena in the real world; meaning a simplified and concise depiction that explains and predicts the phenomena of interest. There are many more definitions of Theory highlighting its importance and its characteristics.

#### **b) *Theory by aim***

Gregor (2006) identified 5 types of theoretical framing in information systems studies: theory for analysing, theory for explaining, theory for predicting, theory for explaining and predicting (EP theory), and theory for design and action (prescriptive). Every theory is expected to be representable, to be made of constructs, to state the type of relationship between the constructs (associative, compositional, unidirectional, bi-directional, conditional, or causal.), and to clarify the scope or limits of generalisation (Gregor, 2006 p.620).

Theory by aim also include *theory of the problem* and *theory of the solution* which present greater grounding, context specificity and phenomenal focus, in comparison to Gregor 5 types abstracted forms, while explicating relationships among concepts and stipulating generative mechanisms and processes generating outcomes (Markus, 2014).

#### **c) *Theory by range***

One identified important issue with theory development in social science and in IS has been in achieving the grandeur (all-inclusive and unifying) of general theories; which in turn were just too remote and abstracted from phenomena and phenomena behaviours to account for detailed orderly descriptions of particulars that are not generalizable (Avison & Malaurent, 2014; Merton, 1949, 1957; John C. Scott, 2017; Weick, 1995). There was a need to engage in developing theories of the middle-

range accounting of phenomena contexts and focussing on particular aspects of these phenomena (Grover, Lyytinen, Shrinivasan, & Tan, 2008; Merton, 1957; Sewchurran & Brown, 2011; Weber, 2012). In middle range theory building, the researcher disaggregates complex contexts and situations into more discrete, carefully defined chunks, and then reintegrates these bits with an explicit analysis of their context (Bourgeois 1979; Peterson 1998). In the end, it is more important to engage into seeking theory by increment and satisfy oneself with an approximate product, a middle-range theory, which improve on an early work or branch out to new possibilities (Laughlin, 1995; Merton, 1957; Weber, 2012).

Critical realism theorising assumes the fallibility and falsifiability of theory while following an “underlabouring” axiology on ontological ground to suggest the development of middle-range theory as one of its most regular output (Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2008a; Smith, 2010).

#### **d) *Theory by perspective***

Theories can also be distinguished according to their embedded logical structure or perspective including variance, process or system (Burton-Jones, McLean, & Monod, 2015). Such distinction is made based on (1) the nature of constructs held, (2) the substantive change in the constructs over time, (3) the relationship among the constructs, and (4) the time sequencing of relationships among constructs (Burton-Jones et al., 2015).

- Perspective of the theory of the variance: constructs are properties of entities varying in values; properties do not change over time; relationship amongst properties are based on the variation of their values; time ordering is not important. This perspective does not provide accounts of substantive change in entities and their properties.
- Perspective of Theories of the process (processual theories): Constructs are entities participating or being affected by events; entities transform over time; sequential relationship between entities; time ordering of events is important. The weakness of this perspective is in its probabilistic rather than deterministic ordering of entities interactions.
- Perspective of Theories of systems: Constructs are systems or wholes comprising parts and possessing emergent properties; Constructs can substantively change over time; parts interact with each other and reciprocally; time sequencing of events and properties are important. The weakness in this perspective stem from its challenges in accounting of change over time.

The process perspective was adopted in this research because of its ability to account of the sequential transformation of entities marked by particular events over time.

#### **e) *Theorising in Information systems research***

It is suggested that theoretical contributions are made when a new conceptualisation, proposition, finding or measurement is added to the existing body of knowledge (Gregor & Hevner, 2013; Markus, 2014). Despite the importance of theory development for the field, Information systems (IS) research has been plagued with little to incomplete theorising (Avison & Malaurent, 2014; John C. Scott, 2017;

Sewchurran & Brown, 2011; Sutton & Staw, 1995). Theories in IS have a tendency to revolve around adoption and use of ICTs, a tendency originating from psychology and suggesting that the use of ICT had little to no social influences (Mingers et al., 2013). Further, authors have advocated for more variety in philosophical perspective, methodological approaches, and topical paradigms (multi and transdisciplinary) and on the importance of the IT artefact (J. L. King & Lyytinen, 2006; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). As a result, it is only very recently that information systems opened to different views of the world, making a difference between an individual, its actions and the context within which the actions are performed.

#### **f) *Theory in Critical Realism IS research***

These definitions of theory suggest a conceptual network of claims/propositions about constructs/concepts and their relations aiming at describing, explaining, predicting or prescribing real world phenomena and phenomena behaviour within the boundaries that constrain their context of application (Mueller & Urbach, 2013). Theories can be Grand, of middle-range or practical; and they can follow variance, process or systems perspectives.

All these theory types were discussed as abstractions of the empirical world; meaning that they usually only refer to the part of reality that is accessible to the senses. However, a majority of these theories are usually limited to account of meaning or observable regularities and correlations; they tend not to account of explanatory causal mechanisms as the elements linking constructs in their framings. They are theories of the empirical venturing sometimes into the actual.

CR understanding of theory and theoretical contribution transcends the empirical domain to reach the real cause of observed phenomena. CR theories are similar to meta-theories which transcend empirical theories to “*outline ontological networks of constructs and relationships applicable over several areas of investigation*” (Gregor, 2006; Gupta & Bostrom, 2009, p. 689). However, there are important differences as meta-theories enjoy sweeping generalisation over a field of inquiry due to the sum of their parts, generalisation in CR theorising is due to the relative endurance of real objects, entities and generative mechanisms within the particular context of their exercise.

Critical Realism definition of theory suggests a framing device which stipulates “*the tendencies of transfactually active mechanisms, which codetermine particular concrete events or phenomena*” (Bhaskar & Danermark, 2006, p. 283). Such theories are presented as mechanism based explanatory frameworks or models where constructs and their relationships are real objects, entities and their generative mechanisms (Markus, 2014). A CR theory is thus expected to have the shape of a system or process theory suggesting enabling conditions and generative mechanisms (Mingers et al., 2013). As a result, CR theory provides IS research with a causal understanding which enables researchers and practitioners to grasp the situated meaning of actions more immediately.

This research aims at producing a middle-range critical realist theoretical contribution explaining the phenomenon of SSA emerging discourse on social media during social movements.

The section continues with a description of the theoretical triangulation method employed in devising a conceptual framework synthesised from the literature as part of an abduction process to obtain a theoretical framework with enough explanatory powers to endure the test of the retrodution process.

### 3.10.2 Systematic combining for abduction

The lack of a satisfactory theoretical framework able to describe the SSA emerging discourse on social media during social movements according to Critical Realism ontological assumptions suggests constructing a conceptual framework based on relevant extant theories and models (Smith, 1997). Such a conceptual construction process is called “*theory matching*” or “*systematic combining*” and exploits the creativity and the imagination of the researcher trying to explain a particular phenomenon; thence the researcher uses thought experiments and judgemental rationality in determining the ability of a particular conceptual composition to sustain the test of facts (Danermark et al., 2002; Dubois & Gadde, 2002, 2014; Spens & Kovács, 2006). Relevant concepts, models and theories are combined, and then the resulting framework is re-described and corroborated in the empirical situation (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, 2014). The research conceptual framework synthesised from the literature is meant at guiding the collection of empirical data which analysis is expected to produce a refined model grounded in the facts (Danermark et al., 2002; Dubois & Gadde, 2014).

The chapter continues with the implementation of systematic combining as part of the abduction process.

### 3.10.3 Conceptualisation of the phenomenon

The phenomenon examined in this research is a social practice generating discourse on social media platforms during social movements in sub-Saharan Africa. The research thence considers a Socio-cultural dimension concerned with South African communities structural trajectories; Community members agency, skills and relationships; a technology dimension where social media mediate communications as per their affordances and functionalities; and a dimension of the relationship between social movements actors and social media as they use them during social movements (Castells, 2011, 2015).

The review of the literature could not suggest any extant theories or model able to causally and processually explain the phenomenon under research, meaning the timely trajectory of the shape of the social practice of discourse of South African community members during social movements. As a consequence, an abductive approach that devises a prior framework from selected relevant theories was adopted.

#### a) *Selected extant theories, models and concepts*

The research selected theories and concepts relevant to explaining the emergence of SSA discourse of resistance over social media during social movements. Selected theories, models and concepts organised according to CR ontological strata are suggested in Table 3.7:

**Table 3.7: Contributing theories, models and concepts in CR ontological depth**

CR Ontological	M/M Approach	NSMT +	TEUM +	Social identity approach +	Social practice + TCA
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layers / Theories		Everyday resistance	Social media Affordance	TMSPM & SCM	+ Mediatization
<b>Empirical</b> – Experience (Outcomes + Activities)	Unvoluntaristic placement Grouping in vested Interest Degree of interpretive freedom Bargaining power / Reflexivity and opportunity cost Directional guidance for strategic action	Power relations Goals and grievances Common values	Empowerment and satisfaction Potential deceptiveness, Security and privacy concerns	Warmth ( <i>good-nature, trustworthiness, tolerance, friendliness, and sincerity</i> ). Competence ( <i>capability, skilfulness, intelligence, and confidence.</i> )	Discourse on social media Routinized behaviour
<b>Actual</b> – Events: Social, cultural and technological interaction + Agential squeeze (Actors + strategies + Activities)	Agential squeeze: Exchange and Power between agents Internal or inner conversation (Discernment, deliberation and dedication) between agents Liabilities (Contingent) Personal identity Social identity	Social movement: Polycentricity, Reticulation and Segmentation Mobilizing structures, political opportunity structure, and cultural framing Networked in multiple form Virality of the movement Leaderlessness Self-reflectiveness Non-programmatic Aim at changing social values Everyday resistance Repertoires of everyday resistance in relation to the configurations of power; Relationships of agents carrying out the acts of resistance; Spatialization in terms of social position and physical location; and Temporalization of everyday resistance occurrences Space of autonomy	Dynamic Mechanism: Powers Misfits and workarounds, Technology mediation Technological cognizance, Liabilities (Contingent) Social media affordances, Trust-distrust dialectics.	Genre Ideology Prejudice Social media roles Citizen journalism Social media activism Self-categorisation ambivalent stereotypes hypothesis social structural correlates hypothesis reference-group favouritism hypothesis Involvement Domination Affiliation Legitimation	Aspects of Discourse + Validity claim Ideal speech situation + public sphere Public opinion Spiral of silence Mediatization Material resources Meanings Competence
<b>Real</b> – Objects, entities, SEP, CEP, PEP and TEP	Primary and corporate agency (Self-consciousness,	culture of autonomy	Enabling structures of systemic influence:		

(Context of social movement)	self-monitoring, reflexivity, creativity and intentionality)  Latest variation in corporate agency  Latest socio-cultural configuration of groups (situational challenges and opportunities)		embeddedness and under-design, information asymmetrical structure, and organisational structure.  Convergence culture		
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These concepts are combined and tested using *judgemental rationality in thought experiments* to determine whether they could align with the explanatory overview of the social practice of using social media during social movements suggested in Figure 1.2 in section 1.1.5. The combination consists in comparing similar concepts then connecting them in initial propositions.

**b) Conceptual ontological stratification and research hypothetical assumption**

The research was conceptualised following critical realism (CR) philosophy in the social science, the Realist social theory and relevant theories, models and concepts related to SSA community members practice of discourse over social media during social movement. This sub-section is structured according to CR ontological strata, suggesting hypothetical assumptions supporting the research conceptual framework. These assumptions are summarised in Table 3.8.

In the empirical domain, the research examines SSA community members' experience of the discourse on social media during social movements, whether produced by themselves or by others with regards to the social movement #feesmustfall.

HA1: Individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa exist in groups or communities sharing the same *life chances* in terms of spatiotemporal, social and cultural situations which places and strategically guides them towards the *vested interest* they ought to pursue, determine their ability to overcome the *opportunity cost* for the desired outcome and determine their *degree of interpretive freedom*

HA2: SSA individuals identify as members of more than one Socio-cultural network (online and offline) depending on their *involvement with their aspirations* and the balance of their Socio-cultural situation with their *affinities to others (Affiliation)*.

HA3: Individual SSA community members experience discourse on social media as authors and audience. They are expected to experience *potential deceptiveness of the technology, security and privacy concerns, empowerment, satisfaction, learning, goals and grievance, common values and the warmth and competence* of in-group and out-group authors.

HA4: Discourse is availed on social media during social movements through social media content or messages containing text, images, audio and video availed on popular platforms intended to groups determined by authors. It is intentional and discursive communication.

HA5: Discursive activities (Befriending, sharing, joining and interacting) include social networking and content generation according to authors strategic orientations.

HA6: Strategic orientation of action over social media encompasses the voluntary or involuntary application of stereotypes, prejudice, virality, genre and register manipulation, and tacit netiquette with the aim of persuading or changing the social environment.

HA7: *Communication events* would take place in a *constituted communication space* within which *actors negotiate and persuade or align* with one another in pursuit of better *lived experiences*.

The actual domain represents aspects of social reality that occur but may not be experienced or observed at the confluence of the intransitive and the transitive dimension of critical realism epistemology. It is a site of interaction between emergent properties through mechanisms of exchange transactions and power relation between agents towards social and systemic integration of contingencies.

HA8: Agents are expected to reflect upon their situation and use their internal conversations and creativity to navigate structural, cultural and technological impingement by stepping into and performing an opportune role while aiming for their desired outcomes.

HA9: As a consequence, deeper elements of the phenomenon under research pertaining structural opportune tendencies and liabilities, technological contingencies (Social media affordances and cognisance), identification, signification, spiral of silence, mediatization and strategies of influence during SSA social movement events are expected expressing themselves as they impinge upon actors' strategies and actions over social media during social movements.

HA10: Social movements espouse everyday resistance tactics and social media affordance of networking, virality, leaderlessness/polycentricity, autonomous tendencies, and social change aims.

HA11: The discourse of resistance on social media is rising because of the activation of liabilities within complex and deep-rooted Socio-cultural conditioning and their generative mechanisms, as they encounter opportune liabilities of social media affordances and the triggering effects of agential impetus.

The real domain is not observable but can be transfactually and transcendently retrospectively deduced. It is constituted by real objects and entities with causal powers or mechanism (tendencies or liabilities); including social, cultural, people and technological emergent properties of relationships. It is the dimension of enduring or relatively intransitive or objective knowledge of reality. The real domain represents in this research the context of the discourse projected by SSA community members over social media during social movement.

HA12: Context encompasses SSA community member's agency bestowing the tendencies of self-consciousness, self-monitoring, reflexivity, creativity and intentionality upon every individual; Post-colonial socio-cultural configuration of groups imposing situational challenges and opportunities to individuals via the distribution of life chances, the definition of roles and the signification of actions; social media socio-cultural embeddedness and under-design enforcing specific social media actions

(carrying liberal, neo-colonial, democratic, convergence culture orders and a culture of autonomy); and the information asymmetrical structure mediating access and use of information.

HA13: These socio-cultural relational emergent properties have been historically changing at least for the past 25 years from effects of various significant events including post-colonial structures meeting the advent of the post-apartheid era carrying the shackles of violence and a tradition of demonstration in South Africa; the spread of television; the spread of the Internet and related services; Globalisation; the crisis of Waithood; the coming of age of born frees and African digital natives; the Arab spring, and the rise of Islamic terrorism.

HA14: Social media affordances contingently complement actors' agential impetus to give rise to an *SSA community member discourse of resistance* on social media denoting agential morphogenesis and displaying empowerment, autonomy and resistance.

**Table 3.8: Research initial propositions and assumptions**

Research themes	Initial Propositions (IP)	Hypothetical assumptions
<b>Discourses of resistance</b>	IP1- Social movement Actors generate/perform the social practice of social media discourse of resistance	HA11
<b>Experience of discourse on social media</b>	IP2- The experience of discourse on social media is generated by the content produced by online discursive activities during social movement	HA3
<b>Social media content</b>	IP3- Social media content is constituted by text, pictures, audio, video and URLs	HA4
<b>Discursive activities Strategic orientation of messages and Socio-cultural signification</b>	IP4- Discursive activities are constituted by strategic orientation of messages combined with socio-cultural signification	HA5 & HA6
<b>Actors' identification, agential impetus and legitimation</b>	IP5- The socio-cultural and technological context influence actors' identification, agential impetus and legitimation	HA1, HA2, HA8 & HA10
<b>Socio-cultural and Technological Context</b>	IP6- Local socio-cultural and technological context is influenced/transformed by the experience of discourse	HA9, HA12 & HA14
<b>Emergence of social media discourse</b>	IP7- The M/M cycle allows to transcendently follow the spatiotemporal rhythmic which resulted in social media discourse of resistance	HA13

### 3.10.4 Research conceptual framework

Based on the realist social theory and hypothesised assumptions, a research conceptual framework is constructed by systematically combining selected concepts from extant theory social, media studies, and computer mediated discourse. The research conceptual framework is expected to describe the practice of social media discourse and suggests an explanation of its emergence during social movements.

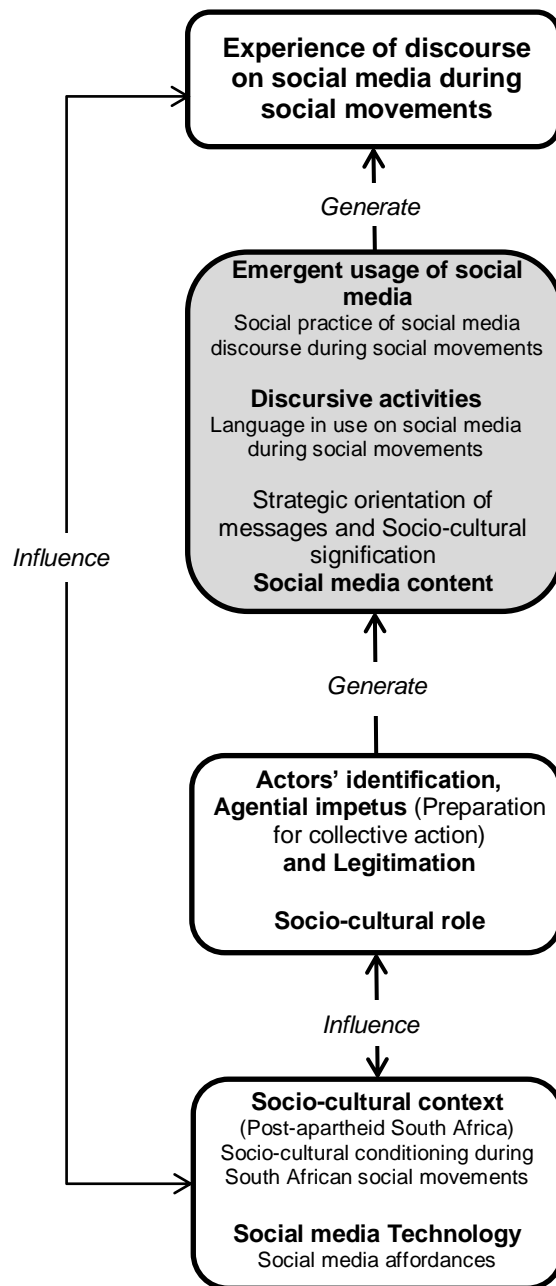
The research conceptual framework represents an *initial proposition* intended to be used as a sensitizing device to guide the data collection and focus the analysis. It was developed out of selected concepts in line with relationships suggested in the initial propositions and assumptions in Table 3.8.

The research conceptual framework was organised in 6 main themes as suggested in Table 3.9 which are linked to each other by causal relations of *influence* and *generation* as suggested in Figure 3.6.

Table 3.9: Research conceptual framework

Stages in the emerging usage of social media	Relevant theories and concepts
Experience of discourse on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Empowerment and satisfaction</li> <li>- Security and privacy concerns / potential deceptiveness,</li> <li>- Common values</li> <li>- Political learning / Social learning</li> <li>- Warmth (good-nature, trustworthiness (Trust-distrust dialectics), tolerance, friendliness, and sincerity).</li> </ul>
Social media content	Sub-Saharan African community members social media content constituted by text, pictures, audio, video and URLs
Discursive activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intentional behaviour: communicative and discursive / involvement</li> <li>- Sharing, joining and interacting</li> <li>- Citizen and participatory journalism</li> <li>- Social media activism</li> <li>- Social networking</li> <li>- Mobilisation for collective action</li> </ul>
Strategic orientation of messages (Rhetorical strategies) and Socio-cultural signification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Netiquette</li> <li>- Virality</li> <li>- Prejudice</li> <li>Signification: genre and register</li> <li>Social movement mobilisation – political opportunity – Cultural framing /Networked in multiple form (Polycentricity, Reticulation and Segmentation), Non-programmatic</li> <li>Leaderlessness, Virality of the movement, Self-reflectiveness</li> <li>Common values - Aim at changing social values</li> <li>- Technological cognizance,</li> <li>- Competence (capability, skilfulness, intelligence, and confidence.)</li> <li>- Dominance/domination</li> </ul>
Actors' identification, agential impetus (Preparation for collective action) and legitimation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification</li> <li>- Social media roles (Reader, contributor, collaborator and Leader)</li> <li>- Anonymity</li> <li>- Collective identity / Affiliation</li> <li>Internal or inner conversation (Discernment, deliberation and dedication) between agents</li> <li>-Stereotyping: ambivalent stereotypes hypothesis, reference-group favouritism hypothesis, social structural correlates hypothesis</li> <li>Legitimation</li> </ul>
Socio-cultural and Technological Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportune structures and their tendencies and liabilities:</li> <li>- Powers</li> <li>- Social media affordances, / Technology mediation / Misfits and workarounds,</li> <li>- Social media infrastructure : Media system, Convergence culture, ICT infrastructure</li> <li>- Embeddedness and under-design and information asymmetrical structure</li> <li>- Space of autonomy, Culture of autonomy (Consumerism, Social inclusion), ideologies of autonomy, liberalism, neo-colonialism, and democracy</li> <li>- Primary and corporate agency (Self-consciousness, self-monitoring, reflexivity, creativity and intentionality)</li> <li>- Socio-cultural conditioning of groups (situational challenges and opportunities):</li> <li>Post-apartheid socio-cultural systems</li> <li>Convergence culture and globalisation</li> </ul>

Figure 3.6 suggests that actors are the main causal factor in the practice of social media discourse. They are influenced by their socio-cultural and technological context and by their experiences. Their online experience of discourse is caused by other instance of that social practice performed by others.



**Figure 3.6: Research conceptual framework – Emergent usage of social media during social movement**

The thesis continues with the description of the methodology deployed in the investigation.

## Chapter IV: Research design and methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

The research investigates South African community members emerging usage of social media during social movements by providing a contextualised social history of their *online discursive enactment of everyday resistance*. That emerging usage was conceptualised as a social practice of discourse over social media, a kind of communicative practice. The research is designed as a critical realist investigation using abductive and retroductive modes of inference.

The phenomenon considered, the emerging practice of social media discourse during the #feesmustfall South African social movement, in accordance with critical realist assumptions, is regarded as a stratified and differentiated entity of the social reality, at a moment in the historical trajectory of local societies (Danermark et al., 2002; Mingers, 2004; Sayer, 1997; Archer, 1998).

The research unites two phases: an empirical phase looking for demi-regularities through qualitative content and critical discourse analysis of case research data, and a transcendental phase reaching into the past to identified events, objects and entities which tendencies and transformations thereof are responsible for the observed social media discourse. The empirical phase presents an exploratory case research design (Yin, 2005) which uses abduction to devise an improved *realist model of social media discursive action* describing discourse during particular events. The transcendental phase applies the M/M approach as a causation model to a re-described *realist model of social media discursive action* using a transcendental and transfactual argument (retroduction) to tell the tale of South African community members' social practice of social media discourse during social movements, and to devise a morphogenetic sequence of their discursive actions (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; Easton, 2010; Mingers et al., 2013).

This chapter is concerned with the choices and deployment of approaches, methodology and methods in this research. It describes and justifies the nature of the research project, the qualitative and processual methodology considered, the methods employed for data collection, for data analysis, the criteria of interpreting the findings, limitations and ethical considerations. The aim is to show that rigorous standards were followed to increase the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the process and of the findings arrived at.

### 4.2 Research design: Explanatory case research

This section presents the design of the research in terms of the internal structure of the research project in accordance with the requirements of the research problem considered, as well as the ontological and epistemological assumptions of critical realism.

#### 4.2.1 The structure of the research project

##### a) *Philosophical paradigm: Critical Realism*

This thesis is argued in accordance with Bhaskar's critical realism (CR) philosophy of social science (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998; Bhaskar, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2015) as research

philosophical paradigm. The author has purposely chosen Roy Bhaskar's Critical Realism for the overall research project design and implementation, because it allows reaching to empirically unobservable phenomena which caused the empirically observed phenomenon; and because it aims at seeking the best possible explanation of reality through an active engagement with fallible theories about it (A. J. Fletcher, 2016). In other terms, the fact that South African (SSA) community members discourse on social media during recent social movements seems spontaneous is because it seems not to be explicable by using empirical observation; suggesting that it is a result, it is a product of unobservable or underlining mechanisms at work. Naïve realism/Positivism bent on observing and measuring wouldn't help much here and relativism/constructionism/interpretivism would add to the confusion since it is not properly equipped to deal with and resent the idea of objective influence. Critical Realism is adequately furnished to tackle the matter at hand and pertinently suggests the existence of such relatively enduring, autonomous and causally efficacious machinery which impinge on actors' behaviours. Further, Critical realism subscribes to *theoretical fallibility* as the engine of science since it is almost impossible to embark in a scientific expedition theory free and it would be blinding not to be able to see beyond the confines of the theory of the moment; it thus permits to shed a light on unobservable workings within the fabric of society by borrowing from our theoretical repertoire to formulate the concepts of discovery and advance the enterprise of science.

Critical realism ontology proposes an intransitive, transfactual, and stratified social reality and acknowledges the value-laden quality of knowledge derived about it, considered in terms of adequacy and epistemic gain (Danermark et al., 2002; Mingers, 2004; Sayer, 1997; Archer, 1998). CR subscribes to epistemic relativity bound by judgemental rationality that subjectively selects a hypothesis on the basis of its causal efficacy (Archer, 1995; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2008a; Danermark et al., 2002; Mingers et al., 2013).

Critical realism epistemology bears the belief that there is a perceivable reality from which a transitive dimension of knowledge (TD) is obtained and a relatively enduring, autonomous and causally efficacious reality in which an intransitive dimension of knowledge (ID) independent from human knowledge, but which can be uncovered resides.

CR fosters trans-disciplinary research, the deployment of mixed methods and the use of retrodution on the basis of abduction as the means for inference to the better explanation (Danermark et al., 2002; Mingers et al., 2013; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012).

#### **b) *Research approach: qualitative and processual approach***

The methodology of this research follows a qualitative and processual approach aligning to the critical realist Morphogenesis / Morphostasis approach (Archer, 1995; Danermark et al., 2002; Wynn Jr. & Williams, 2012). The research is concerned with the trajectory of the social practice of discourse as it is performed over social media by South African community members entrenched in the context of a social movement. These reasons implicitly favour the adoption of a qualitative and processual approach that satisfies Flick, Von Kardorff and Stenke (2004, p7) assumptions of qualitative research:

- “1 *Social reality is understood as a shared product and attribution of meanings.*
- 2 *Processual nature and reflexivity of social reality are assumed.*
- 3 *‘Objective’ life circumstances are made relevant to a life-world through subjective meanings.*
- 4 *The communicative nature of social reality permits the reconstruction of constructions of social reality to become the starting point for research.”*

In addition, the Morphogenesis (transformation) / Morphostasis (reproduction) of social practice is a spatiotemporal (situated in time and space) and on-going (uninterrupted) process which investigation requires an approach able to collect and analyse rich, non-discrete and complex data (Archer, 1995; Danermark et al., 2002; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012).

### **c) Research strategy: Explanatory single case research**

This research develops a critical realist explanatory case research strategy of South African community members emergent usage (performance of the social practice of discourse) of social media during social movements (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012; Yin, 2013). An explanatory single case research presents a detailed rendition of the facts of the case, consideration of alternative explanation of the phenomenon, and the elicitation of the most grounded explanation of the phenomenon studied (Benbasat, Goldstein, & Mead, 1987; Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; Gill, 2011; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012; Yin, 2013). In particular, an explanatory case research approach seeks to explain phenomena by revealing the irreducible (context bound) and complex causal links of their makeup; it also has a greater potential for the generalisation of findings in theory generation and verification, following a logic of replication (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Christie, Rowe, Perry, & Chamard, 2000; Gill, 2011; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012; Yin, 2013).

As a critical realist case research, it follows a retroductive structure based on an abductive approach (Meyer & Lunnay, 2013) iteratively combining inductive and deductive phases throughout the strata of the critical realist ontology (Easton, 2010; Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012; Mingers et al., 2013; Tsang, 2014).

The explanatory single case research strategy was deployed in two phases: First, an empirical and exploratory phase using abductive inference re-describing the *a priori* research conceptual framework in the context of the observed phenomenon (See Chapters 5 and 6); then a transcendental phase following a retroductive inference, through the M/M approach as a causation model, in order to theoretically eliciting, elaborating, corroborating and generalising the resulting framework (See chapter 7).

#### **4.2.2 Research problem, questions and objectives**

This subsection summarizes research problem, questions, objectives and methods; providing a single point of concordance into the conceptualisation and operationalization of the research (See Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Research questions, objectives and methods**

Research Problem	<i>The contribution of social media to the transformation of the social practice of discourse which causes SSA community members' agential impetus to generate a discourse of resistance on social media during social movements is not well understood.</i>	
Main Research question	<i>Why are South African community members using social media to enact online discursive resistance during social movements?</i>	
Research aim	<i>To explain SSA community members' emergent usage ("online discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance") of social media during social movements.</i>	
<b>Research question</b>	<b>Research objective</b>	<b>Methods</b>
<b>Phase 1: Exploratory case research development</b>		
<i>What is the nature of the social media discourse performed by South African community members during the #feesmustfall social movement?</i>	To determine the nature of the social media discourse performed by South African community members during the #feesmustfall social movement	CDA of social media data
<i>What are the contextual, semantic and rhetorical features of South African community members' social media discourse during the #feesmustfall social movement?</i>	To determine South African community members' social media use of language, registers and genre to carry influential messages during social movements	<u>Collection:</u> Social media archived data  <u>Analysis:</u> Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) and CDA
<i>What are the social media affordances, socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships that are shaping South African community members' interactions during the #feesmustfall social movement?</i>	To determine social media affordances, socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships shaping South African community members' interactions during social movements	<u>Collection:</u> Literature and document review, in-depth interviews  <u>Analysis:</u> Qualitative content analysis
<i>How did South African community members construct, sustain, or fracture alliances and relationships of domination/subordination over social media during the #feesmustfall social movement?</i>	To explain the relationship of South African social media discourse during #feesmustfall with the hegemonic socio-cultural systems conditioning its authors' lifeworld; and devise a realist model of social media discursive action describing how social media discourse emerges from its context during social movements	<u>Collection:</u> Social media archived data, Literature and document review, in-depth interviews <u>Analysis:</u> QCA and CDA
<b>Phase 2: Transcendental argument development</b>		
<i>Before the emergence of social media, how were South African community members' socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships like?</i>	To reconstitute socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships shaping South African interactions before the emergence of social media;	<u>Collection:</u> Document review  <u>Analysis:</u> QCA
<i>How has the emergence of social media affected South African communities' socio-cultural interactions?</i>	To reconstitute the interaction between socio-cultural emergent properties of relationships and the interaction of the product of these with social media affordances.	<u>Collection:</u> Document review, social media archived data, in-depth and semi-structured interviews <u>Analysis:</u> CDA and M/M approach causation model
<i>How has South African community members' discourse transformed to emerge empowered on social media during social movements?</i>	To elaborate a morphogenetic sequence of communicative action explaining how South African community members' discourse transformed to emerge empowered on social media during social movement;	<u>Collection:</u> Social media archived data, Literature and document review, in-depth interviews <u>Analysis:</u> CDA and M/M approach causation model

### **4.3 Research methodology**

This section presents the selected research units of analysis and observation, sampling strategy and research methods and instruments used in this research.

#### **4.3.1 Research Unit of analysis and unit of observation**

The *unit of analysis* of this research is South African community members' social practice of discourse production over social media during social movements, entailing the examination of actors' resources, the meaning they are projecting, and the competencies involved in posting messages on social media.

The *unit of observation* considered is South African community members' social media content during social movements; in this case "tweets" or Twitter™ posts, their meanings and the competence deployed for their production during #feesmustfall campaigns. It also includes statutory documents and other textual evidence of design and enactment of the use of social media, as well as testimonial accounts by South African community members.

#### **4.3.2 Selective and theoretical sampling strategy**

The research used a selective and theoretical sampling strategy to extract 564 most relevant and popular tweets from a cumulative population of 53 570 messages to undergo Critical Discourse Analysis. In addition, 13 respondents were purposefully selected to provide data about the experience of using social media during social movements via in-depth interviews (See section 4.5.2).

One major objective of sampling in qualitative research is to achieve information saturation from the sample considered (Morse, 1995, 2000; Mason, 2010).

The final sample size was determined by the results of the data analysis and the concept of saturation as explained by Strauss and Corbin (1998). According to that method of sampling, the results of data analysis are going to determine whether more data would need to be harvested or interviews would be needed for concepts to emerge and saturate. This way of sampling is in line with recommendations by Mason (2010) and align with Strauss and Corbin who pointed out that "*Sometimes the researcher has no choice and must settle for a theoretical scheme that is less developed than desired*" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.292). Furthermore, Critical realism iterative process of abduction implies the use of theoretical sampling in achieving conceptual saturation during empirical corroboration (Decoteau, 2016a).

### **4.4 Empirical and exploratory phase: case research design**

This section discusses the case research design, criteria for case selection, case research procedure and protocol, case data collection and analysis, and findings inference and presentation.

During the empirical and exploratory phase, data was collected in 3 moves:

- firstly, harvesting of archived social media posts on Twitter™ with links to resources on Facebook™ and Youtube.com™ was performed;

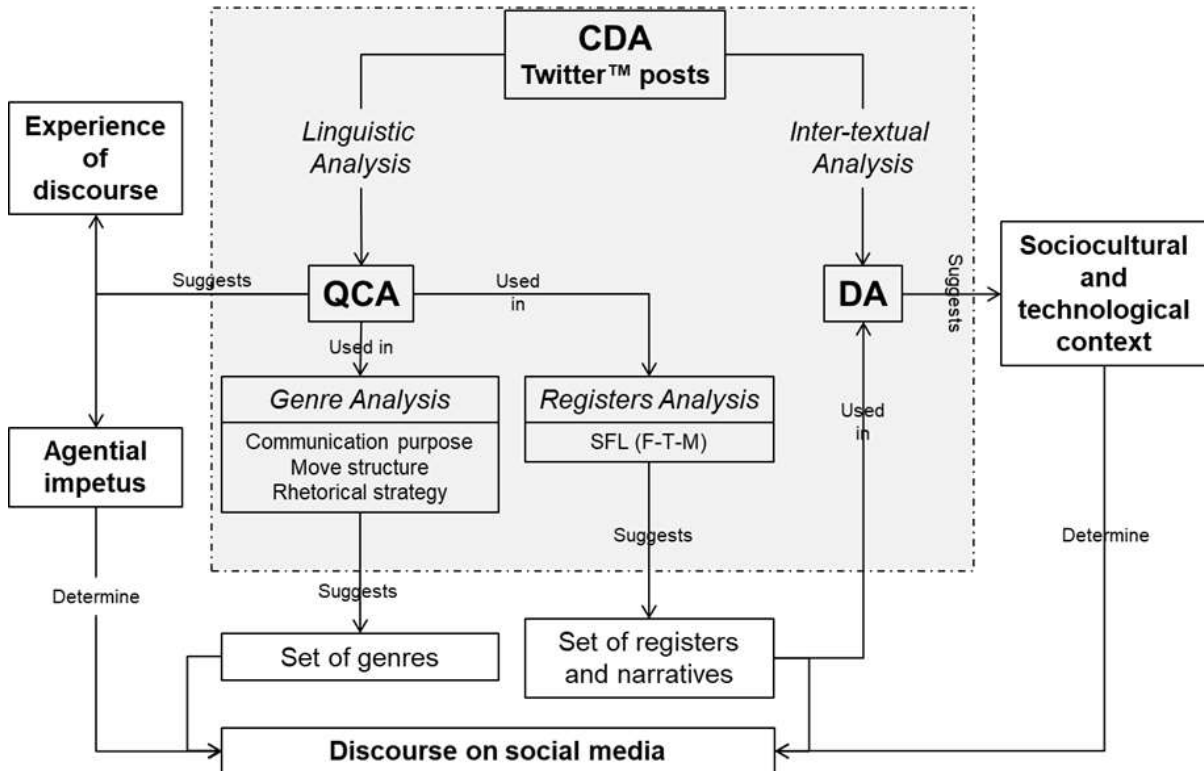
- then in-depth interviews were performed at the height of the #feesmustfall movement (2015 & 2016) and after free education was declared (2018);
- and finally, a review of literature and relevant documents was conducted to identify Socio-cultural conditions and agential situations before the emergence of social media and how they progressed through time.

The data collected from social media was analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) making complementary use of the product of document review and of the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) of interview data (See Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1).

**Table 4.2: Methods for the empirical and abductive phase**

Data Collection methods	Data analysis methods	Period
Retrieval of social media archives	CDA and QCA	2015 and 2016
In-depth interviews	QCA	2016 - 2018
Document and Literature review	Document analysis - DA	2015 - 2018

Figure 4.1 depicts how data analysis research methods were deployed in the study.



**Figure 4.1: Data analysis structure**

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 are explained in sections 4.5 and 4.6. This section 4.4 continues with a rational and description of the single case research design deployed in the empirical phase.

#### 4.4.1 Single case research design

A case research can be defined as a detailed inquiry over a complex and context bound phenomenon, aiming at providing an analysis of particular entities (organisations, groups, events, objects, etc.) and relevant processes involved in the phenomenon investigated; on the basis of data

collected from multiple sources (Benbasat et al., 1987; Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; Gill, 2011; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012; Yin, 2013). A case research design presents a set of main components including: the research question, *a priori* theory or a proposition, the unit of analysis, the mode of inference linking the data to the proposition, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2013).

This research project uses a single case research design of *South African community members' emergent usage of social media during #feesmustfall social movement in South Africa*.

#### **4.4.2 Rational for selecting the single case research approach**

It was elected to use a single case research for theory development in this research project. The objective of developing a theory from a single case research is not to abstract the theory from the case, but to devise a theory that explains it (Easton, 2010; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Tsang, 2014). This type of single case research is a "*What could be*" case research (Schofield, 2002). It allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied in the context in which it is embedded: an ideal instance of its expression. Findings from such a case are generalisable to a theory that explains the phenomenon, and to other similar situations (Easton, 2010; Schofield, 2002). "*What could be*" single cases present extreme and unique conditions able to justify critical realist single case research as they also resonate with Bhaskar (2008a, p. 13) ontological question "*what must the world be like for science to be possible?*" The case is extreme because the phenomenon that is studied expresses itself intensely enough to yield a rich source of information allowing it not to be representative of regular cases but of an exceptional instance of heightened display of otherwise unclear activity which could have been quickly dismissed as marginal discrepancy (Yin, 2013).

The *uniqueness* of the case stems from the fact that even though many studies have noted the connection of social media to new social movements, the question remains of explaining the deeper contribution of social media to new social movements as an artefact carrying a socio-cultural load and harbouring liabilities and tendencies. These tendencies and liabilities are able to affect the socio-cultural system within which the artefact found itself immersed into. This research investigates the emergent usage of social media that enacts online discursive resistance during #feesmustfall social movement in South Africa. The #feesmustfall social movement was exceptional for its unexpected use of social media, its magnitude and speed, the studentship characteristics, the demand for free education and for the decolonisation of education and society at large, its horizontal and distributed leadership and the wave of support it enjoyed both locally and internationally. As a consequence, the case for the research was purposefully selected following a phenomenon-driven approach to elect a conforming representation most likely to bestow the workings of emergent properties of relationships relevant to the emergence of South African social media discourse during social movements (M. Fletcher et al., 2018; Gerring & Cojocar, 2016; Seawright & Gerring, 2008).

The criteria considered in the selection of the case included:

- The type of phenomenon: Practice of discourse over social media during a social movement in SSA

- The uniqueness of the phenomenon: With the advent of the #feesmustfall social movement, the phenomenon of interest (online discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance) became salient enough to be noticeable.
- Socio-cultural contextual representation of the SSA area: The history of South Africa is bound to the colonisation and apartheid regimes which still wields the greatest social, economic and cultural influence locally.
- A socio-culturally transformative social movement: The phenomenon studied is not the #feesmustfall social movement itself; but the supportive online discursive practice enacted during the movement.
- Period of occurrence and availability of social media within the population during events: Mobile telephony, the Internet and social media had deeply penetrated societies in southern Africa. The social media campaigns considered in the research took place in South Africa within 2015-2016-time period.
- Ease of data access: the researcher was staying in Cape Town and was studying at the University of Cape Town when the events took place. These elements allowed for a fairer access to data.

#### **4.4.3 Single case research procedure and protocol**

The research follows a single case research design that develops a case of the South African community members' social practice of discourse over social media during the #feesmustfall social movement (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2013). The case is laid out following the structure offered by the research conceptual framework (See Table 3.9). The case is constituted from triangulating data from collected archived social media content and in-depth interviews; before analysing it using Qualitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis (Flick, 2017).

The research conceptual framework (See section 3.10.4, Table 3.9 and Figure 3.6) breaks down the phenomenon under investigation into 4 main parts exploring the relationships between the experience of the discourse deployed, observed social media events/outcomes, the agential impetus which drove the actors and the contextual Socio-cultural and technological emergent properties underpinning the phenomenon. These parts suggest an explanation of the rise of South African community members social media discourse through their initiative, from the interaction of their respective Socio-cultural environments with the affordances of social media.

The transcendental and transfactual narrative of emergence that follows covers about 25 years of history spanning from the early development of the *Internet*, the exiting from the *Apartheid regime* in South Africa, till the respective events of #feesmustfall. Then, a more grounded theoretical framework is abstracted.

#### **4.5 Case research data collection**

Data collection methods employed in this research included: Collection of archived publicly available South African social media content concerning #feesmustfall social movements; in-depth interviews were conducted with South African community members around specific topics regarding their use of

social media during the #feesmustfall social movements; and a document review was realised seeking evidences of the changes in the South African social practice of discourse in post-apartheid South Africa.

#### **4.5.1 Harvesting archived #feesmustfall social media data**

Publicly available data was harvested from mainly the social media platform Twitter™, and sporadically from publicly available Facebook™ and YouTube™ content, and recorded on a spreadsheet in order to be analysed (Giglietto & Lee, 2017). Facebook™ and YouTube™ were consulted in support of observations realised on Twitter™ data. These social media utterances are the discursive enactment which interests this research.

For #feesmustfall, 7778 Twitter™ posts or tweets were collected at the height of the protest in 2015 (23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015) and 43480 Tweets were collected at the height of the protest in 2016 (13<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016). These tweets were collected using an app called “*Twitter Archiver*” developed by Amit Agarwal ([www.labnol.org](http://www.labnol.org)). The “*Twitter Archiver*” allows to save posts relevant to specific hash-tags or keywords to an MS Excel or Google spread sheet. The complete metadata of tweets is also collected, allowing for quick observation of trends. The metadata included: Date, Screen Name, Full Name, Tweet Text, Tweet ID, App, Followers, Follows, Retweets, Favourites, Verified, User Since, Location, Bio, Profile Image, and Google Maps.

Most influential Facebook groups consulted during #feesmustfall and suggested by Twitter data and respondents included:

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/179535662388939> CPUT #feesmustfall group with 7 382 members
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1068222366523703> #feesmustfall national rally group with 16 910 members
- <https://www.facebook.com/Fees-Must-Fall-Campaign-441161529407175/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Asinamali-Wits-Fees-Must-Fall-205855039768086/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/FeesMustFallJoburg/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/WitsVuvuzela/>

#### **4.5.2 In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews in order to obtain respondents perceptions, experiences, motivations and attitudes around their Socio-cultural background, their social identities, their social media competence and their performance of the social practice of discourse over social media during the social movement (Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

The aim of doing the interviews was to collect an apercu of SSA social media users' motivation, perception and intentionality during social movement, in order to empirically corroborate the argument about agential impetus drive and social structures' impingement in their discursive actions.

13 in-depth interviews were performed in collecting South African community members' experience of social media discourse during the #feesmustfall social movement.

This section continues with a description of participants and a recount of the process of participant sampling and interviewing.

### **a) *Participants sampling***

Participants in this research were general members of the public using social media who studied at a South African university in 2015 and 2016 during #feesmustfall social movement events. A sample of 13 participants were purposefully selected based on their ability to provide rich information about their experience of using social media during #feesmustfall events, and within availability, time and other resource constraints (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015).

### **b) *Participants description***

13 individuals were recruited to be respondents in the research following a purposeful sampling approach aiming at getting a representative experience of the emergent usage of social media during #feesmustfall. For the first round of interviews in 2016, the participants were students at institutions of higher learning in the Western Cape province. In the second round of interviews between August and October 2018, participants were comprised of general members of the public who studied at university during #feesmustfall events in 2015 and 2016. All the interviewees were social media users and English speakers, even though mostly as a second language; 5 participants were employed, while the others were still looking for employment. Demographic, occupational, favourite social media platform and personal belief/ideology were collected from interview data. Table 4.3 summarises interviewee particulars.

### **c) *Interview process***

The interview process deployed following a dramaturgical model and the guide of an interview protocol (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Myers & Newman, 2007; D. W. Turner, 2010). Starting from the moment the appointment for the interview was set and the interviewer is facing the participant:

- The researcher explains the modalities of the interview to the participant (Process, request for audio recording, aim, topic, ethics, need for consent, and duration)
- Starting of the audio recording
- Collection of written consent (participants sign the consent form)
- Starting questioning,
- Use of the interview protocol to frame the questioning
- Closing of the interview by thanking the participant
- End of audio recording
- Interview audio file is named and saved in secured cloud storage
- The interview is then transcribed verbatim and uploaded into a CAQDAS in preparation for analysis

### **d) *Interview protocol***

Interview questions were organised in an interview protocol in order to provide guidance in the collection of participants statements (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; D. W. Turner, 2010). Participants were asked questions to describe their experience of using social media during the events of #feesmustfall. They were also requested to provide the motivation or rationale behind their actions; then they were asked about their socio-cultural environment. Respondents were asked these main questions: (See appendix A3 for more detail regarding interview questions).

- How would you describe your experience of posting and consuming messages on social media?
- What were your intention when you were posting messages on social media during #feesmustfall?
- How would you qualify the act of posting messages on social media during #feesmustfall?
- What is post-apartheid South Africa to you?
- What do you think was the reason for #feesmustfall to you?
- How much influence over society and authorities do you think that your contributions on social media would have made?
- What are your favourite social media platforms?

**Table 4.3: Respondents demographics socio-economic belief / ideology**

Respondent	Demographics (Gender, Race, social group and language)			Occupation	Favourite social media platform	Personal belief/ideology
	Gender	Race	Language			
SAFMF1	Male	Black	Xosa/English	Unemployed /student	Facebook Twitter WhatsApp	Black consciousness /Socialist
SAFMF2	Male	Black	Zulu/English	Internship /Student	Facebook WhatsApp Twitter	Black consciousness /Socialist
SAFMF3	Male	Black	Zulu/English	Unemployed /student	Facebook WhatsApp	Black consciousness /Socialist
SAFMF4	Female	Black	Xosa/English	Unemployed /student	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	Black consciousness /Socialist
SAFMF5	Male	Black	Kenya/English	Unemployed /student	WhatsApp Facebook Twitter	Black consciousness /Socialist
SAFMF6	Male	Black	Xosa/English	Employed in retail / student	Facebook Instagram Twitter	Black consciousness /Socialist
SAFMF7	Female	Black	English /Afrikaans	Employed in engineering /student	WhatsApp Facebook Twitter	Liberal/capitalist
SAFMF8	Male	White	English	Unemployed /student	Facebook WhatsApp Twitter	Liberal/capitalist
SAFMF9	Female	Black	Zimbabwe /English	Unemployed /student	WhatsApp Facebook Twitter	Black consciousness
SAFMF10	Male	Coloured	English /Afrikaans	Employed in retail /student	Facebook WhatsApp	Black consciousness /socialist
SAFMF11	Female	Black	Tsonga /English	Employed in Engineering /student	WhatsApp Instagram Twitter	Black consciousness /socialist
SAFMF12	Male	White	English	Unemployed /student	WhatsApp Instagram Twitter	Liberal /capitalist
SAFMF13	Male	Black	Xosa/English	CEO / Student	WhatsApp Facebook Twitter	Black consciousness /Socialist

#### 4.5.3 Document review

A broad review of documentation (reports and other documents) relevant to the topic of the research was performed. That review of documents was thematic, following concepts and narratives present in

the Twitter posts and in research problem and questions (Boote & Beile, 2005; Randolph, 2009). The review involved the use of themes derived from the registers identified in the sampled Twitter™ posts during #feesmustfall (Okoli & Schabram, 2010; Webster & Watson, 2002; Rowe, 2014; Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015). The aim was to establish the intertextuality and interdiscursivity of availed Twitter™ posts, and to envision the socio-cultural historical trajectory of South Africa, in addition to social media development and pattern of use during throughout.

## **4.6 Case research data analysis**

The analysis of the case data looked for evidence of the change or transformation in South African community members' emergent usage of social media during social movements. The methods of analysis include Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) and Thematic Analysis (TA). These methods were triangulated to produce the case.

The analysis involved the use of qualitative content analysis (QCA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to deal with empirical data; then the use of the M/M approach for the transcendental argument to provide an explanation of the emergence of the phenomenon researched upon.

### **4.6.1 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)**

The data collected from the social media platform Twitter™ underwent Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) scrutiny. Fairclough approach to CDA was chosen in this research because of its compatibility with Critical Realism and its ability to allow analysing textual, pictorial, audio and video utterances over social media platforms, in order to be able to determine underlying ideologies, power relations and strategies implemented by community members as dominance relates to social injustice (Fairclough, 2005, 2012; Fairclough, Jessop, & Sayer, 2002). The discourse that is investigated here represents the process of deploying competence in using material resources and manipulating genres and registers to project a particular meaning denoting recurrent Socio-culturally grounded themes with the aim of shaping social reality by constructing, sustaining, or fracturing alliances and relationships of domination/subordination. Genres are considered here in a broader sense than in "speech genre" and thematic formations considered are registers in lieu of "discursive type". The aim of the analysis is to determine how South African community members used social media in that effect: the focus is on the production and reception of "text" over social media, understood here as the information technology artefact being utilized.

#### **a) *Selecting Critical Discourse Analysis***

The reasons for choosing CDA as a suitable method for analysing data about the emerging SSA social practice of discourse over social media during social movement, in comparison to other methods of textual analysis like QCA, were outlined by Fairclough (Fairclough, 1992b) suggesting:

- a theoretical reason: social structures are in a dialectical relationship with social action – Macro/micro vs structure/agency interaction; social analysis of discourse entails revealing the precise mechanisms and modalities of the social and ideological work of language;

- a methodological reason (texts constitute a major source of evidence for grounding claims about social structures, relations and processes)
- a historical reason (sensitive barometers of social processes, movement and diversity)
- a political reason (It is more and more through texts that social control and social domination are exercised, and negotiated and resisted)

Further, many authors have used the CDA in computer mediated communication studies, making of it an appropriate method for analysing power relations on social media (Christensen, 2011; Fairclough, 2012; Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015; Jank, 1997; Rambe, 2012; Thompson, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a trans-disciplinary research methodology for the social analysis of discourse permitting to understand how people produce and comprehend discourse (Fairclough, 2012; Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). There are many approaches to CDA which differ theoretically (understanding of discourse), methodologically (the steps to follow in performing the analysis) and in the type of research issues they focus on (power, social injustice, inequality or domination). The most prominent models are the CDA dimension model by Van Dijk (investigating the 3 dimensions of discourse structure, mental or socio-cognitive structures and social structures), and the CDA levels of analysis approach (investigating text, discursive practice and Socio-cultural structures) by Fairclough. Fairclough approach is grounded in social realist ontology while Van Dijk approach is grounded in the relativist ontology of critical social theory.

#### **b) *Some critics of Critical Discourse Analysis***

Notwithstanding that ability to uncover ideological resonances and power asymmetries, CDA suffers a few shortcomings which necessitate some remedy in order to properly accommodate the critical realism need to uncover enduring and autonomous causes to observed phenomena: firstly, communication on social media platforms is non-linear and multimodal in the sense that social media content tends to tell only parts of the story on a post while it is also a medium carrying or giving access to more content, creating various challenges for standard CDA meant to research semiotic content but not media (Fairclough, 1992b, 2003); secondly, CDA commitment to emancipation blinds away alternative interpretation to the one offered by the analyst (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Bhatia, 2015); and thirdly even CDA by Fairclough seems to be influenced by a non-realist discourse metatheory suggesting a TINA (There Is No Alternative) social ontology exclusively determined by contingent political antagonisms (Flatschart, 2016).

These shortcomings can be greatly mitigated by differentiating aspects of CDA with the use of systematic methods including Qualitative Content Analysis, genre and register analysis within a semiotic frame of asignification allowing to explore the praxis of discourse and the relatively objective impingement of socio-cultural emergent properties and technology affordance upon it (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; DeLanda, 2012, 2016; Fairclough, 1992b; Lomborg, 2014; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

### **c) Deploying Critical Discourse Analysis**

CDA consists of three interrelated analytical processes including text analysis (Description), processing analysis (interpretation including semiotic and interdiscursive depth) and Socio-cultural analysis (explanation) (Jank, 1997; Rambe, 2012). These analytical processes investigate the three dimensions of discourse including the object of analysis (the text), the process by which the object is produced and received by human subjects (posting and reading/listening/viewing), and the socio-cultural conditions governing these processes (Postcolonial and social media era) (Fairclough, 2012; Jank, 1997). In the instance of this research, the focus is on the process by which the text is produced and received by human subjects, as well as the reasons for such.

This CDA methodology focuses on “*dialectical relations between structures and strategies*” by identifying shifting articulations of genres, discourses and styles (metaphors and methonymies) in texts and identifying shifting articulations in orders of discourse (Fairclough, 2012). Orders of discourse are understood as specific configuration of conventionalised practice which are available to text producers and interpreters in particular social situations and may include genres, narratives and discourses (Fairclough, 1992b, 2012; Fairclough et al., 2002). It is suggested that a high level of interdiscursivity is associated with change, while a low level of interdiscursivity signals the reproduction of the established order (Fairclough, 2012).

Fairclough (2012, pp 13-15) offers a 4 stages methodological approach to CDA:

*“Stage 1: Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspects.*

*Step 1: Select a research topic that relates to, or points up, a social wrong and that can productively be approached in a trans-disciplinary way, with a particular focus on dialectical relations between semiotic and other ‘moments.*

*Step 2: Construct objects of research for initially identified research topics by theorizing them in a trans-disciplinary way.*

*Stage 2: Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong.*

*1. Analyse dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements: between orders of discourse and other elements of social practices, between texts and other elements of events.*

*2. Select texts, and points of focus and categories for their analysis, in the light of, and appropriately to, the constitution of the object of research.*

*3. Carry out analysis of texts – both interdiscursive analysis and linguistic/semiotic analysis.*

*Stage 3: Consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong.*

*Stage 4: Identify possible ways past the obstacles.”*

The analytical approach involves the identification of syntagmatic (genre or text genre) and paradigmatic (registers or discursive types) arrangements and themes emergent from Twitter posts. The process is performed using qualitative content analysis (QCA) as a method to obtain grounded genres and registers (Rambe, 2012).

### **d) Performing critical discourse analysis**

Discourse represents the deployment of competence in using material resources and manipulating genres and registers to project a particular meaning denoting recurrent Socio-culturally grounded themes with the aim of shaping social reality by constructing, sustaining, or fracturing alliances and

relationships of domination/subordination. The goal of the analysis was to determine how South African community members studying at university during #feesmustfall used social media in that effect.

CDA was performed on the data collected from the social media platform Twitter™. The research applied Fairclough (2012, pp 13-15) 4 stages methodological approach to CDA:

**“Stage 1:** *Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspects.*

*Step 1: Select a research topic that relates to, or points up, a social wrong and that can productively be approached in a trans-disciplinary way, with a particular focus on dialectical relations between semiotic and other ‘moments.*

The research presented here investigated the emergent usage of social media during South African social movement aiming at changing outrageous social conditions, in the case presented here, the perceived unaffordability of higher education fees and the perceived perpetuation of colonial socio-cultural emergent properties in post-apartheid South African higher education. The research problem investigated is the lack of knowledge about the changes in the social practice of discourse which causes South African community members to generate a discourse of resistance on social media during social movements.

*Step 2: Construct objects of research for initially identified research topics by theorizing them in a trans-disciplinary way.*

The object of the research or hypothetical prior theoretical framework for the research, was constructed by selecting and collating relevant concepts. Concepts were taken from various frameworks, models and theories across media/communication studies, political science, sociology, computer science and information systems, and combine to form a *prior* conceptual framework (See section 3.8 for extant theories considered and section 3.10 for the conceptual framework itself).

**Stage 2:** *Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong.*

The obstacles to addressing the social wrong are of systemic level, within the post-apartheid situation of South Africa, globalisation and convergence culture, and the mediatizing effect of social media upon agential impetus of South African students during #feesmustfall 2015 and 2016.

1. *Analyse dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements: between orders of discourse and other elements of social practices, between texts and other elements of events.*

The orders of discourse (genre and registers) were considered in relationship with the constrain/enablement of the social media platform Twitter™, and in relation to the Socio-cultural context of events taking place on and off-line. As such, between genres and registers, and material resources and discursive competence of users; between the Twitter™ posts and other elements of events.

The analysis considered a micro level of analysis describing a Twitter posts, a link level providing an interpretation of the combination of strategy and meaning (genres and registers) deployed as well as a macro level where a social explanation is inferred underlining the generative mechanisms of power and domination shaping discourses (See Table 4.5 and Table 6.12).

**Table 4.4: CDA analytical framework (Rambe, 2012)**

	<b>Micro</b>	<b>Link</b>	<b>Macro</b>
<b>Text</b>	Description (Text analysis)	Interpretation (Discursive practice)	Explanation (Social practice)
<b>Excerpt of raw data (Twitter posts)</b>			

2. *Select texts, and points of focus and categories for their analysis, in the light of, and appropriately to, the constitution of the object of research.*

The corpuses of text were gathered according to relevant hashtags and keywords used in the search. The combination of Hashtags and keywords allowed obtaining corpuses of text which could be considered as single texts to analyse. Main observations at this stage were that there were roughly 25% actual Twitter™ posts (as oppose to re-posts or re-tweets) and only about 1% of all Twitter posts had more than 5 re-tweets and could be considered influential enough and of interest for the research.

#feesmustfall:

For this corpus, hashtags including #feesmustfall, #feesmustfall2016, #fees2017, #nationalshutdown, #unionbuilding, #cput, #tut, #uckar, #uct, #vut, and #wits led to the collection of 7778 posts in 2015 and 43480 posts in 2016. 1936 out of 7778 posts and 12033 out of 43480 contained actual messages (about 25% of all Twitter™ posts). Only 80 out of 1936 and 459 out of 12033 were actual posts with more than 5 *re-tweets* (Representing about 1% of all Twitter™ posts). That set of 1% of all collected *tweets* was responsible for over 75% of all *re-tweets* represented the sample considered for the research into #feesmustfall.

**Table 4.5 Sampling of Twitter posts**

	<b>#Feesmustfall 2015</b>	<b>#Feesmustfall 2016</b>
Total tweets collected	7778	43480
Actual Tweets	1936	12033
Actual Tweets not retweeted	1474	9422
Most popular tweets and research sample RT ≥ 5	80 – (1.02 % of collected Tweets)	459 – (1.05% of collected Tweets)

Preparation of Twitter™ data

The preparation of Tweets for analysis followed a theoretical sampling process to select the pool of posts/Tweets upon which the analysis was to be performed; then they were grouped. These activities included:

- To count the tweets to separate retweets from actual tweets,
- To select the most popular ones (the main criteria here was for a *tweet* to have at least 10 *re-tweets* to be part of the pool),
- To group them according to publication date and time, to group them according to the social actor who generated them (SM contributor / reports / citizen journalist (students)/ celebrity (TV or radio personality) / Social entrepreneurs / Lawyers / Concerned citizen / Business person, SM reader, Professional Journalist, Media house, Political party, NGO / Student organisations, Business and Gov Agency)
- Then to group them according to their communication purpose.

### 3. Carry out analysis of texts – both *interdiscursive analysis and linguistic/semiotic analysis*.

The QACDAS assisted in the QCA, performed according to linguistic/semiotic analysis based on genre analysis and Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Figueiredo, 2010) categories. After that, interdiscursive analysis was performed, interrogating the relationships between genres and registers, and between elements these elements and mainstream discourse repertoires.

#### Linguistics / semiotic analysis

The linguistics and semiotic analysis were performed using QCA with the aim of determining genres and registers deployed in the sampled Twitter™ posts. The relationship considered between genres and registers was based on an understanding which suggests that genres are used to manipulate registers' modes over a medium of communication. Registers' field and tenor were expected to suggest users' repertoires of meaning used in signifying the reality they are going through.

Determination was done following a QCA coding process with the difference being that in this case the coding was extended to the structure of the text as per *systemic functional linguistics* (SFL) annotation for registers and genres.

The analysis included then to:

- read every sampled post/tweet,
- determine its register according to contextual features (Field, tenor and mode) and its semantic features (Ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning). Lexical and grammatical analysis was not performed as the frequency of these categories was not expected to be of great assistance in the discovery of registers (Hasan, 2009).
- Due to the large number of posts to consider, a systematic linguistic analysis at a clause level was not performed. Registers were collated in memos
- determine its genre (communicative purpose, move structure and rhetorical strategies), and determine the practice (combination of competence, meaning and material resources) being enacted, inculcated and materialized.

#### Interdiscursive and intertextual analysis

The interdiscursive and intertextual analysis was performed using a deductive document analysis (DA) of reference documents and mainstream discourses on the basis of registers deployed by the authors of posts.

The intertextual analysis was realised by identifying manifest (partial or complete quote) and constitutive (paraphrase) referential discourses from various document (Documents (policies, acts

and other regulations), reports, speeches, and statements.) generated and enacted by relevant entities and actors exercising their powers or deploying their adopted ideology during particular events.

Then expressed social challenges and injustices, ideological lines, power relations and communicative strategies are drawn out to reveal the discourses deployed.

**Stage 3:** *Consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong.*

The social wrongs which are the focus of the research, fee increase and colonial perpetuation in higher education, have historical and political legitimacy for the achievement of freedom; while the ability to find the funds to subsidise free education might become challenging. These considerations are drawn out at the end of the analysis suggesting that the status quo is also an opportunity benefiting a section of South African population.

**Stage 4:** *Identify possible ways past the obstacles*

The obstacles of institutional and systemic level need to be overcome through the establishment of autonomous spaces of resistance and the integration of community members opinions in participatory decision making allowing social systems to transform, mitigate internal conflicts and become more inclusive. The findings of the case suggest a *realist model of social media discursive action* which relates social media discourse to the structures and mechanisms which caused it

**e) Interdiscursive/intertextual analysis as part of CDA**

Intertextual analysis determines how much a text resonates of particular orders of discourse (genres, discourses or narratives) present in other texts; suggesting its connexion to a network of meaning or a recurrent pattern of semantic relation across texts (Fairclough, 2003). Intertextual analysis relates a given text to the social practice of discourse through which meanings are made, used, and modified.

In the case of this research, the sample of Twitter™ post is the text that is studied. This text is projecting a pattern of meaning recurrent in many other related Twitter™ posts, documents, narratives, discourse or genre (Dunmire, 2009; Fairclough, 2012). Thus, the exercise consists in finding these recurrent pattern of semantic relations or thematic formation (syntagmatic and paradigmatic associations) linking other texts to the one examined; and looking out for recombination and transformation of these association signalling contingent shifts and the possibility of social change (Dunmire, 2009; Fairclough, 2012). The existence of intertextuality suggests structural impingement and suggest the existence of causally efficacious entities and objects.

Interdiscursive and intertextual analysis are performed through genre analysis and semiotic analysis and explained using asignification semiotics.

**Genre analysis** is integrated in this research as part of the CDA in identifying genre types in the text. Genres are purposefully created by discourse communities sharing schemata or thought patterns that organise categories of information and relationship amongst these categories (Swales, 1990).

As a consequence, the analysis of genre in the body of text sampled in this research is understood as the identification of thought patterns and attitudes in South African community members discourse

deployed by combining the modalities of communicative purpose, move structure and rhetorical strategy (Bhatia, 1996, 2015). Genres are understood as patterns of syntagmatic arrangements of signs.

**Semiotic (registers) analysis** is integrated in this research as part of CDA to capture pattern of meaning loaded into events referred to, into the relationship of interlocutors and into role and function given to the text by its producer. Registers in this research describe the semiotic structures or the thematic pattern of meaning constituting a given text (Halliday, 1978). This is done by determining *field* (ideational meaning), *tenor* (interpersonal meaning) and *mode* of text (Textual meaning - Commitment to truth or necessity in textual meaning) as per the categorisation of the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) framing of registers (Fairclough, 1992b, 2003; Figueiredo, 2010).

**Table 4.6: Components of genre, register, and discourse practice**

<b>Discourse practice</b>
Material resources
Meaning
Competence
<b>Genre</b>
Rhetorical strategies
Communicative purpose
Move structure
<b>Registers' components according to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)</b>
Field
Tenor
Mode

**Asignification semiotics** suggests that signs are speculatively representative of a referential object. It is considered in this research because it facilitates explaining critical realism logic of absence or negativity in an entropic world by suggesting that signs, or in the case of this research genres, registers, and technology, can be disaggregated into meaningless elements and reagggregated to reflect a different meaning (Bhaskar, 2008b; DeLanda, 2012). As such, asignification semiotics allows to envision the relatively objective influence of the interactions of post-apartheid socio-cultural emergent properties of relationships, convergence culture and globalisation, and social media affordances through students and authorities' agential impetus (driven by reflexivity and creativity) as they perform discourses over social media during the #feesmustfall movement.

As a consequence, it is expected that South African community members' social media discourse during social movements would cover a certain number of registers structured according to particular genres and conveying ideologies, institutional and systemic influence as well as the relationships between them, according to their geographical, Socio-cultural and technological historical trajectories. The meaning is expected to be encapsulated in paraphrases or direct quotes, implicit statements, and symbolic statements referring to existing semantic patterns in documents and mainstream narratives and discourses.

#### **4.6.2 Qualitative content analysis (QCA)**

The data collected as text was subjected to *Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)*. QCA is a method for data condensation, abstraction, sense-making and subjective interpretation of systematically categorised qualitative material in an attempt to identify themes, patterns, core consistencies and meaning (Cho & Lee, 2014; ELo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014; ELo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). Those core consistencies represent *manifest and latent meanings* drawn from the text. *Manifest meaning* refers to descriptions or explanations in the text while *latent meaning* refers to explanations derived from noticeable consistencies when various descriptions and explanations are joined together.

##### **a) The process of qualitative content analysis (QCA)**

The research followed a generic process of qualitative content analysis (Cho & Lee, 2014; ELo et al., 2014; ELo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaismoradi et al., 2016) with steps including usual coding principles (Saldaña, 2009; Theron, 2015):

- Selection, preparation and definition of the unit of analysis
  - o The selection of data to be analysed
  - o The preparation of data through the transcription of interviews and the organisation of Twitter™ post according to popularity and communication purposes
- Definition of main categories, categories and meaning units of the coding schemes from the prior theoretical framework
- Coding of all text into the constructs of the prior theoretical framework, including emerging categories as they
- Assessment and revision of codes/categories
- Selection of more salient categories
- Reporting on the process and on its outcome

The QCA is used here to support critical discourse analysis (CDA) by helping to determine the main constructs in the interviews and to determine main genres and registers in the body of tweets (corpus of texts) as they feed into the constructs of the prior theoretical framework.

##### **b) Performing qualitative content analysis (QCA) as part of CDA**

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was performed using the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) Atlas.ti then Nvivo. The move from Atlas.ti to Nvivo was caused by the lack of a license to continue using it.

The QCA process was iterative including deductive coding using constructs from the *a priori* conceptual framework and inductive or free coding allowing to explore other salient patterns, or drop constructs that are not grounded (Bytheway, 2013).

QCA was realised in 2 waves:

- First wave included using codes from the *a priori* conceptual framework and deriving free codes emerging from the observation of in-depth interviews. At the end of this process, codes

were associated, concatenated or merged to improve the *a priori* model. This strategy was used to achieve a better grounding of the *a priori* model into the South African context where the phenomenon was expressed.

- In the second wave, the social media data (Twitter™ data) was coded using codes from the analysis of Interview data augmented with arising codes from interlinguistic and semiotic analysis framing. Categories were then associated, concatenated or merged again and ordered to obtain 3 levels of categories (Main categories, categories and sub-categories) constituting the building blocks of an improved realist model of social media discursive action.

Categories and main categories obtained from the QCA of Twitter posts also contained a description of genres deployed in terms of *communication purpose, move structure and rhetorical strategies* (See section 6.3.4a and Table 6.9). It allowed to determine the 6 main syntagmatic arrangements deployed by authors of posts.

Also, the QCA of the Twitter posts and interviews also highlighted *registers and narratives* commonly used or invoked in the performance of discourse (See section 6.3.4b and Table 6.10). Their determination applied the SFL framing into aggregating and selecting the most frequent projected paradigms.

#### **4.6.3 Document analysis as part of CDA**

The data collected using document review and literature review was analysed using document analysis. Document analysis is understood as a systematic method for reviewing and evaluating documents (Bowen, 2009). It consists on an iterative process finding, selecting, appraising (reading, interpreting and assessing relevance) and synthesising the data contained in documents (Bowen, 2009). The documents were organised or clustered according to a set of mainstream discourses, narratives and registers identified in the Twitter posts (See section 6.3.4b); providing evidence of intertextuality and socio-cultural impingements on discursive practice.

The method was used in this research to obtain evidence of intertextuality and suggests the spatiotemporal trajectory of Socio-cultural and technological environmental impingement on the South African community members discourse over social media during #feesmustfall social movements.

A non-exhaustive list of documents (News articles, magazine articles, acts of law, video documentaries, academic literature, novels, poetry, photos, etc.) is suggested in appendix A5

#### **4.6.4 Triangulation of sources and of methods**

Triangulation is a research strategy consisting in combining multiple methods of data collection and data analysis in order to enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the result of these processes and in order to extend the scope of the research to a broader perspective or a broader context (Carcary, 2009; ELo et al., 2014; Flick, 2004, 2017; Hoque, Covalski, & Gooneratne, 2013). Triangulation is understood as a *theory-related and context-bound validation technique grounded in abductive reasoning that is compatible with critical realism* (Modell, 2009; p218). That compatibility stems from Critical realism stratified and relatively enduring ontology coupled to its epistemological value

awareness which engagement requires data and methodological diversity and plurality (McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Modell, 2015; Zachariadis et al., 2013).

The research used a triangulation of sources and of methods in order to strengthen and validate the findings (Flick, 2017; Modell, 2015). The research associated different research methods to get the data; and after analysing the data, it gathered results from all instruments in order to complete or confirm the findings through combination and comparison (Dubois & Gadde, 2014).

#### **4.7 Transcendental and transfactual phase: Applying the M/M approach**

This section describes how the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach is implemented as a causation framework in this research, which is to say as a meta-theory for making *middle-range* explanatory social theories. As a consequence, the section presents the structure of the transcendental and transfactual argument developing an *analytical history of emergence* (analytical tale) of South African community members' social practice of discourse over social media during social movements. *Analytical histories of emergence* are retroductive and fallible. They help to devise a theoretical framing of the phenomenon by performing theoretical elaboration, empirical corroboration and analytical generalisation within its processes.

*Theoretical elaboration* involved hypothesizing explanations of the phenomenon as caused by identified generative mechanisms, with the help of middle-range theories from social science and information systems; then placing the re-described framework into the critical realism causation model (M/M approach) to reproduce the causal trail which gave rise to the phenomenon (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011). The resulting explanation then underwent empirical corroboration to validate its potency.

*Empirical corroboration* is a process by which empirical evidence explicating the phenomenon studied are simulated accordingly in order to insure that identified mechanisms adequately epitomise reality and have enough causal profundity and better explanatory powers than other explanations (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012). That process helped to validate the new explanation as a better elaboration of alternative theories. The validated framework reflects empirical regularity in the population studied and would be able to support theoretical or analytical generalisation claims as it is possible to reach from a case research strategy (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012; Tsang, 2014)

That analysis is intended to elicit an explanation that highlight the underpinning contextual transformation which enabled the performance of discourse by South African community members observed on social media during a local social movement. Theoretical elaboration and empirical corroboration require judgemental rationality and thought experiment (see section 2.2.2).

The section continues with a description of the method of using M/M approach in explaining the phenomenon studied, comprehending sub-sections on principles of explaining social reality with the M/M approach, structural conditioning, social and cultural interaction, structural elaboration and M/M of the social system.

#### **4.7.1 Explaining social reality with the M/M approach**

The research uses the M/M approach as an explanatory or causation framework to implement a transcendental and transfactual argument (Retroduction) that goes beyond facts in order to unveil the way a real entity or object would be constituted and the way such entity or object would behave (see section 2.2.4) (Bhaskar, 1993).

According to the M/M approach, transformation and reproduction of Socio-cultural forms emerge from the dialectical relationship between agency and social systems in a process essentially guided by natural necessity (meaning by enablement and disablement of their tendencies during interactions with others) (Archer, 1995).

The causal powers of Socio-cultural forms are mediated through human agency which has the capacity to transform or reproduce them. Socio-cultural forms are irreducible to each other, relatively autonomous and relatively enduring allowing them to constrain or enable the actions of the Agent.

Socio-cultural forms are the conditions of social life and therefore the condition of any intentional communicative action including social media discourse initiated by social agents (Archer, 1995). The particular social life resulting at any given time from that dialectical relationship is considered “*vexatious*” since it does not satisfy any social agent’s wants; causing agents to attempt to modify its conditions by making risky choices, by grouping in vested interests, by seeking control of material resources, or by growing bargaining power and negotiating strength in pursuit of self-cultivation (Archer, 2000, 2007a, 2007b).

The dialectic structure/agency is epitomised by analytical dualism of social reality which system integration stack is in interplay with its social integration stack (See Table 4.9). In that configuration change in system integration tends to arise from agents’ interaction which is sensitive to the level of social integration involved. In the same way, change in social integration would tend to arise from change in Socio-cultural conditioning. Nevertheless, social reproduction (morphostasis) depends upon high social integration in cases of necessary complementarity and necessary contradiction with systemic integration, while social transformation (morphogenesis) depends upon low social integration in cases of contingent complementarity and contingent contradiction with systemic integration (See Tables 4.7 and 4.8).

#### **4.7.2 Structural conditioning**

##### **a) *Social positioning: of odds, gods and something else***

M/M approach schema to explain social reality starts with social positioning or situation into which people are born. Social positioning is caused by Socio-cultural emergent properties as conditioning. Socio-cultural conditioning is complementarily or contradictorily contingent upon *involuntary placement and* presents different sections of society (social situation or context) with different *vested interests* to pursue; which is to say, “*by the grace of God*” beneficial or fateful; just like the quality of treatment one would have received for being a Caucasian (considerate treatment) or an African (casual treatment) at an African airport in 2010.

The pursuit or not of vested interests carries an *opportunity cost* which social structures allocates according to people and groups' social positioning. These costs influence people by providing them with reasons for action or no action and by enhancing or constraining their *interpretive freedom* and *bargaining power* in preparing (defensive or promotive strategies) for action. Such influence causes people to choose on the basis of their individual valuation of material and ideal interests, as well as valuation of the relations between these two. Such "*structural mediation is an objective influence which conditions action patterns and supplies agents with strategic directional guidance*" (Archer, 1995, p196). However, reflexivity gives people the potential for circumventing Socio-cultural conditioning.

Material and ideal interests (things like access to funds and respectability) supply people with objective reasons to engage their reflexivity and act to overcome dilemmas like being wealthy without a title of honourability.

**b) Conditional causality from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> order structures: Murmurs from beyond**

Social positioning within systemic integration is a 1<sup>st</sup> order structuration. At that level, people are only agents or members of collectivities sharing the same life chances. In order to contribute or transform society starting with their immediate environment (Neighbourhood, work place, city or country) they have to step into social roles and become social actors. Social positioning set agents up for particular roles in society, making it very costly for them to eye other opportunities. Social roles are point of contact between social and cultural emergent properties (SEPs and CEPs) and agents which come to animate them. As they become actors, agents bring their personal identity into their social roles. As a consequence, stemming from their personal identity, agent's social identity is sensitive to their reflexivity and their creativity.

Institutions are 2<sup>nd</sup> order structures in the systemic integration stack and provide strategic directional guidance (conditioning) for large sections of population. An agent can experience a deterrent to change or an opportunity for change in its social context respectively created by coherence and tension in the relationships between institutions' internal components (objects, smaller structures and various generative mechanisms). These coherence and tension in the relationships of an institution's components are respectively termed *congruence and incongruence of the systemic context*.

Congruent contexts cause agents to act in solidarity to reaffirm social necessary complementarity (resulting in morphostasis) or act in diversification to highlight social contingent complementarity (resulting in morphogenesis). Incongruent contexts cause agents to act in order to contain the incompatibility (resulting in morphostasis) or polarise people across it (resulting in morphogenesis) (See Table 4.8). 2<sup>nd</sup> order SEPs and CEPs actualisation (rising towards being experienced) depends upon congruence with Socio-cultural conditioning at a lower level; if they are incongruent, SEPs and CEPs powers would remain unexercised and the agent would not be feeling their reach.

Systemic level (or 3<sup>rd</sup> order emergent properties level) compatibilities and incompatibilities are not immediately obvious to agents but are reflected in quotidian practical situations. Social systems components include institutions, roles and distribution. For instance, in a sub-Saharan situation where

education is highly valued as way to social upward mobility: after sacrificing so much to get an education of a high standard, jobs are still out of reach for the majority of the youth; but the young elite, with the same level of qualification just get the jobs. This caricatural scenario points at a pursuit of a vested interest from a difficult social positioning which fall short due to lesser bargaining power in a necessarily incompatible situation where the system value education but only awards a specific few with employment.

**c) Situational Logic: Hands tied**

Archer (1995, p216) suggests a set of *situational logics* which “*predispose agents towards specific courses of action*” by providing favourable or unfavourable motivating reasons for these courses of action: *Protection, compromise, elimination and opportunism*. These situation logics respond to the 4 possible institutional level relationships including *necessary complementarities (or compatibilities), necessary incompatibilities, contingent complementarities (or compatibilities), and contingent incompatibilities* (see Table 4.8). For every one of the four relational situations agents are predisposed to follow four individually advantageous strategies: to be *defensive, concessionary, competitive, or opportunistic* (p217, see Table 4.8). As a result, different groups would expect to gain or lose differently depending on the situation obtaining. *Situational logics* condition agents’ strategic actions and signal the presence of generative mechanisms for this setting of social reality; which fulfilment could lead to morphogenesis or morphostasis of the social forms involved. A positive or a negative outcome for a particular strategic course is in turn conditioned by agents’ bargaining power and negotiating strength at the social positioning level.

Logical relationships between theories or beliefs are of contradiction or complementarity. (p229) while social relationships bound to material resources following transactions of exchange and power are of compatibility and incompatibility.

**Table 4.7: Structural conditioning of strategic action (Archer, 1995, p.216)**

Type of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Order emergent properties	Situational logic	Strategic action or groups mode of interaction
Necessary compatibility	Protection	Defensive
Necessary incompatibility	Correction	Concessionary
Contingent incompatibility	Elimination	Competitive
Contingent compatibility	Opportunism	Opportunistic

**Table 4.8: Cultural configuration and their situational logical (Archer, 1995, p.217)**

Logical relationships between CEPs	Situational logic
Constraining contradiction / Ideational syncretism	Correction
Concomitant complementarity / Ideational systematization	Protection
Competitive contradiction / ideational diversity	Elimination
Contingent complementarity/ideational specialisation	Opportunism

**4.7.3 Social and cultural interaction**

The M/M approach suggests that agents’ interactions which relate to material resources are *social interactions* (S-I) and influence emergence in social structures (SEPs); and agents’ interactions which relate to ideas and material resources that influence emergence in culture are *socio-cultural*

interactions (S-C). SEPs and CEPs are usually asynchronous and see their strategic influences running in parallel. Their congruence generates 3<sup>rd</sup> orders emergent properties with powers of systemic magnitude which ultimately determine a morphogenesis or morphostasis outcome.

*The analysis of interaction is concerned with following through the constraining influences exerted by the changing resource distributions on transactions between vested interest groups. (Archer, 1995, p299). Socio-cultural interaction is explained by levels of: bargaining power, negotiating strength, transformational or reproductive powers, and agency (capacity and impetus).*

Table 4.9 presents the 4 common strategies and their different manifestations at systemic and social integration levels. Tables 4.10 suggest a set of 16 possible generative processes or mechanisms immediate effects to frame causal accounts of emergence.

**Table 4.9 Conditions for morphostasis and morphogenesis (Archer, 1995, p295)**

		SYSTEMIC INTEGRATION (Cultural or Structural)		
		High	Low	
SOCIAL INTEGRATION	High	Necessary complementarity (Compatibility)	Necessary contradiction (Incompatibility)	Morphostasis
	Low	Contingent complementarity (Compatibility)	Contingent contradiction (incompatibility)	Morphogenesis

**Table 4.10: Cultural & structural configuration for M/M approach at systemic and societal levels (Archer, 1995, p303)**

Conditions for M/M	Contradictions (Incompatibility)		Complementarities (Compatibility)	
	Necessary	Contingent	Necessary	Contingent
<b>Situational Logic</b>	correction	elimination	protection	opportunism
<b>CEP</b>				
<b>C.S level (Ideational)</b>	<i>Syncretism</i>	<i>Pluralism (diversity)</i>	<i>Systematization</i>	<i>Specialisation</i>
<b>S-C level</b>	Unification	Cleavage	Reproduction	Sectionalism
<b>SEP</b>				
<b>S.S level (Social)</b>	<i>Compromise</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Integration</i>	<i>Differentiation</i>
<b>S-I level</b>	Containment	Polarization	Solidarity	Diversification
CS – Cultural system    S-C – Socio-cultural interaction    CEP - cultural emergent properties; SS – Structural system    S-I – Social interaction    SEP - structural emergent properties.				

Before summarizing how this happens, we shall first outline the Morphogenetic Cycle to delineate the crucial intersection of SEPs and CEPs in agent interaction.

#### 4.7.4 Structural elaboration

According to Archer (1995), *structural elaboration* sanctions the M/M cycle sequence with the establishment of a structural emergence or the reproduction of the previous structural configuration: it is the outcome of socio-cultural interaction. As a 3<sup>rd</sup> order emergent property, structural elaboration emerges from the interplay between 2<sup>nd</sup> order emergent properties (PEPs, SEPs and CEPs)

*Cultural elaboration* is induced at the intersection of the two domains (SEPs & CEPs) through the influence of *social interaction* (S-I) on *Socio-cultural interaction* (S-C) (Archer, 1995, p315). *Structural*

*elaboration* is mediated through the processes of *exchange transactions and power relations* when *bargaining power* is converted into *negotiating strength* between *corporate agents*.

1<sup>st</sup> order emergent properties are the result of S-I; 2<sup>nd</sup> order emergent properties are the result of the result of necessary and internal relation within the former; and 3<sup>rd</sup> order emergent properties, as the result of the result of the result represent outcomes which consequences are either societal morphogenesis or morphostasis (Archer, 1995, p325). The generic effect of *cultural morphogenesis* on *structural morphostasis* is that ideational change stimulates social regrouping (Archer, 1995, p218).

#### **4.7.5 The morphogenesis/morphostasis of the social system**

Agents' interaction causes social and cultural domains to intersect during the Morphogenetic cycle. Such intersection is characterised by *conjunction* or *disjunction* towards the achievement of an outcome of societal and systemic change or stability. Opportunities for change arise when there are irreconcilable discrepancies in the degrees of social and systemic integrations. The M/M approach offers to scrutinise the interplay in 4 possible combinations at the hinge of interaction between SEPs and CEPs ensuing in transformation (Morphogenesis) or not (Morphostasis) of one or the two types of emergent properties. This is made possible by the concept of *reciprocal effects* between SEPs and CEPs suggesting that any change in internally and necessary relations between the components of either one emergent property will avail the possibility of change in the other one. As a consequence, it is necessary to evaluate the interplay between SEPs and CEPs in explaining the real effect of agents' actions. SEPs and CEPs M/M cycles conjunction and disjunction combinations include: Structural and Cultural morphostasis; Structural and cultural morphogenesis; Structural morphogenesis and cultural morphostasis; Structural morphostasis and cultural morphogenesis.

##### **a) Conjunction 1: Structural and Cultural morphostasis**

This situation of SEPs and CEPs M/M intersection suggests an environment where social and cultural elites need one another for their survival and are interested in maintaining the status quo of monolithic power or cultural homogeneity. Ideational alternatives are very limited and marginalised groups have access to very little resources to be able to challenge the powers of the day. Archer (1995, p309) calls that the *Myth of Cultural Integration* as observed in ancient civilisations which sometimes lasted millennia.

##### **b) Conjunction 2: Structural and cultural morphogenesis**

This combination emerges when there is great diversity within SEPs and CEPs. Each domain presents many interactive organised groups. Eventual outcomes of this intersection are chiefly contingent to the relationship between material and ideational interests. Material groups would seek legitimacy while ideational groups would ally to them to survive. In so happening, social and cultural morphogenesis or elaboration would take place almost simultaneously.

**c) *Disjunction 1: Structural morphogenesis and cultural morphostasis***

This disjunction occurs when there is a dominant cultural corporate agent with access to important material interests. Reasons for such an occurrence can be the advent of a new technology, greater availability of material resources controlled by cultural figures, and political alliances. The stable cultural context will dull the drive for social change and in the process social agents that feel culturally trapped will start looking for new sources of legitimation. The result is cultural elaboration as new social corporate agents arise in the cultural realm.

**d) *Disjunction 2: Structural morphostasis and cultural morphogenesis***

In this intersection situation, there are many dominant social agents, each representing a minimum number of cultural contexts in an environment of great cultural diversity. Since the dominant agent only speaks for one or a few cultural contexts, the result of this situation is regrouping in interest groups coalescing around conforming ideas, leading to structural elaboration. It may also occur with the intensification of existing social conflicts ensuing in greater polarisation of vested interests.

**4.7.6 Developing analytical history of emergence**

A historical and spatial recount of the transformation of South African community members discourse during a 29 years span was argued for to demonstrate its emergence and to hint at its future following the M/M approach sequential and processual framing. 3 epochs or time periods were selected: 1989-1997, 1998-2007 and 2008-2017.

During each of these periods, South African discourse is generated by prevailing structural conditioning and social interactions which are introduced to digital communication. Systemic tendencies of Socio-cultural and technological Morphogenetic / Morphostatic *conjunction* and *disjunction* are assessed:

- as *actors' identification* fluctuates and institutions are reviewed following particular *situational logic* (correction, elimination, protection and opportunism) over necessary or contingent contradiction/incompatibility and complementarity/compatibility of interacting social, cultural, and technological emergent properties of relationships;
- as they relate to *individual community members' agential impetus* through *conditioning and interaction*;
- and as *transformed discourse practice* is elaborated.

Merging the findings from the case research to the analytical history of emergence provided for the constitution of a Morphogenetic sequence of South African community members' communicative action which demonstrates the emergence of South African community members' usage of social media as a space of transformative negation for the Freedom fighter.

Despite being recognisable for making use of "instrumental and Strategic" communication, Leaders are the category of users who tend to use all available communication areas.

*“As social beings, all our interactional contexts are social, and involve people doing things with their lives (field), interacting with others (tenor) and using some communicational channel and abstraction to do so (mode). Furthermore, our social contexts involve people participating in staged, goal-oriented activities (genres).” Systemic functional linguistics (SFL), (Figueiredo, 2010, p137)*

*As Halliday (1978: 10) points out, “the context of situation is a theoretical construct for explaining how a text relates to the social processes within which it is located”, and consists of three components: the main social activity taking place, the people involved in it (plus the way they relate to one another), and the roles and functions of the text within this social activity—known technically in systemic functional linguistics as ‘field’, tenor and mode.” (Figueiredo, 2010, p124)*

**Table 4.11: Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Figueiredo, 2010)**

CONTEXT OF SITUATION Contextual feature of discourse (situational determinant of text) Discourse community Register	SEMANTICS Linguistic metafunctions	LEXICO-GRAMMAR Clause level
Field: main social activity taking place	Ideational meanings	Transitivity structures Material processes Relational process Attributes Circumstances
Tenor: the people involved in it and their relationships	Interpersonal meanings	Modality structures Absence of modal markers Modulation
Mode: the roles and functions of the text within this social activity	Textual meaning	Thematic structure Causal conjunction Adversative conjunction

#### 4.7.7 Findings of the empirical and exploratory phase

The empirical and exploratory phase uses the logic of abduction (See section 2.2.3) in order to deliver a potent framework to further improve in the transcendental phase, following an iterative process of systematic combining (Dubois & Gadde, 2014).

The findings allowed elaborating a “realist model of discursive action” further to be improved in the transcendental phase.

#### 4.8 Evaluation of the research

The evaluation of this qualitative research can be performed on the basis of this monograph recalling how the project was conceived, designed, executed and reported. Hence, the research has made the effort to achieve credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability of its design, choice and application of theory and methods, as well as in the presentation of findings following the orthodoxy of the requirements for a doctoral thesis (Golafshani, 2003; Oliver, 2011; Shenton, 2004; Thomas & Magvilvy, 2011; Tracy, 2010).

#### **4.8.1 Reliability, validity and trustworthiness**

The reliability and validity of this research will take root from its ability to follow rigorous and reproducible methodology as per critical realism case research requirements (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012; Tsang, 2014).

Further, the use of a single case research is meant to validate by confirming and complementing the findings in the attempt of generalising them to a broader context (Gill, 2011; Yin, 2013).

In addition a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) Atlas.Ti v7 was used in enhancing the trustworthiness of the research (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012).

#### **4.8.2 Transferability: generalisation in critical realism**

The project was undertaken following a scrupulous research design so that it can be reproduced in another setting so as to generate representative data which can then be subjected to comparative analysis. The project has developed a conceptual framework which can be applied in other settings or cities (Thomas & Magvilvy, 2011)

#### **4.8.3 Confirmability and dependability**

*Dependability* refers to “*the coherence of the internal process and the way the researcher accounts for changing conditions in the phenomena*” (Bradley, 1993:437).

*Confirmability* refers to “*the extent to which the characteristics of the data, as posited by the researcher, can be confirmed by others who read or reviewed the research results*” (Bradley, 1993:437).

The research process was thoroughly documented to enable third parties to follow the steps taken, with their opportunities and challenges, in the research design, data collection and analysis, and interpretation of findings. That documentation allowed for the dependability of the process reported and for the confirmability of the data collected; contributing to the trustworthiness of the findings obtained.

### **4.9 Delineation of the research**

#### **4.9.1 Scope of the research**

This research was scoped in a sub-Saharan African country where its aim, available resources, philosophical paradigm, timeframe, and specific empirical situation could be contained:

- 1- The research pursues a realistic explanation of the phenomenon under research that recognises that meaning-making is an individual and context-mediated process;
- 2- Available resources and time frame imparted for the completion of the doctoral degree program;
- 3- The research was conducted and argued with the perspective of Bhaskar (1993) Dialectical Critical Realist perspective;
- 4- The research was a snapshot inquiry and only collected data about the social movement during the time frame it lapsed;

- 5- The empirical situation of the research is limited to the social movement #Feesmustfall in South Africa.

#### **4.9.2 Limitations of case research and how they were handled**

- The data collection for the research was performed by harvesting #feesmustfall related Twitter posts in October 2015 and 2016, while interviews were performed in 2016, 2017 and 2018.
- This research develops an explanatory single case study of the social practice of South African community members' discourse over social media during social movements.
- The main social media platform considered was Twitter™ with some supporting data from Facebook™ and YouTube.com™ as authors of Twitter posts would use these platforms to refer to supporting content
- Interview data was collected in the South African city of Cape Town
- The research is a critical realist inquiry predominantly using qualitative data
- The research focused on young educated South African individual community members and only mentioned other stakeholders of South African social movements including government agencies, businesses, and community organisations when needed.
- The research met with some challenges in recruiting #feesmustfall respondents due to security concerns they were experiencing. It was resorted to follow a different approach in the inquiry, where participants would only be individuals not at the core of events, but close enough to have had the intention to get involved or even got involved in one way or another. The rationale here was that they would also be carrying the changes which allowed for a particular practice of discourse on social media to emerge.

#### **4.9.3 Contribution of the research**

This research provides theoretical, practical and methodological contributions to knowledge.

The research contributes knowledge in the research field, to practitioners of social media activism, citizen journalism and to other stakeholders ready to engage with South African actors:

- The research proposes a processual *realist model of social media discursive action - ReMDA*
- Practitioners will benefit by being able to distinguish the social media levers of new social movements successes, or use these levers for better engagement with the needs of the people in governance decision and policy making
- The other stakeholders can develop maps to engage with South African communities and satisfy their needs or diffuse emotions before protest erupts
- The research also proposes a method of performing critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Twitter™ and other microblogging archived data

#### **4.10 Ethics of the research**

Ethical consideration in this research can be reflected at 3 levels:

- 1- This work is my own unaided endeavour and all sources mentioned were rigorously acknowledged as per APA version 6 academic referencing style.
- 2- The research secured respondents' consent and ethical clearance from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the Faculty of Commerce before carrying out fieldwork. In addition, ethical conduct as per UCT standards was upheld to protect respondents, participants, the investigator and the university from possible damages and loss.
- 3- The research maintained publicly available referential details of Twitter posts' authors belonging to organisations, opinion leaders, celebrities and public figures as acknowledgement of their authorship of their Twitter publications.
- 4- The research refrained from accessing respondents who were actively and directly involved in the protest to avoid for anyone of them incurring any harm resulting from their participation in the research.

## Chapter V: Description of the case research context

This chapter presents the Socio-cultural context surrounding the discourses of #feesmustfall campaigns purported over social media by South African community members. The argument is based on a thematic document review performed according to the research conceptual framework and extended from July 2016 to July 2018. It describes the context of the exploratory case along themes including: a description of the #feesmustfall student social movement in South Africa, the link between #Rhodesmustfall and #feesmustfall campaigns, the inheritance of the struggle against colonialism, South African dominant ideological discourses during the campaigns, and the social media usage amongst the young in the country.

The aim was to gather documentary evidence about the context of the phenomenon studied from official publications, websites, media outlets, legislations and other reports: Recalling the events which sparked the protests; socio-cultural, economic and technological systems which nested them, and competing dominant mainstream discourses referred and aligned with in the social media posts.

The chapter continues with a presentation of the events of #feesmustfall social movements online and offline campaigns

### 5.1 #feesmustfall student social movement in South Africa

On the **14<sup>th</sup> October 2015**, Students of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) protest over a proposed 10.5% University fee increase for 2016. Their plight is heartfelt by students all over the country and conversations heat up around the matter as most South African Universities are preparing to also implement fee increases in 2016.

Rapidly, between the **16<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015** Rhodes University (RU), University of Cape Town (UCT), University of Pretoria (UP), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), University of Limpopo (UL), the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), University of the Western Cape (UWC), Stellenbosch University (SU), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the University of Fort Hare (UF) join in the protest. Students have risen up. They are mobilised for national shutdown of Universities (#nationalshutdown) until their demands of 0% fee increase, free quality education and no outsourcing of staff at universities are met. The minister of Higher education Dr Bonginkosi Emmanuel "Blade" Nzimande in concert with vice-chancellors of universities proposes a reduced fee increase of 6% for 2016. His proposition is outright rejected for the fees are already estimated too exorbitant for any increase to be bearable.

On the **21<sup>st</sup> October 2015** protesting students of Western Cape Universities force the gates of parliament in Cape Town, demanding to be heard. They are met with riot police who brutally repel them from the premises not without offering a strange picture of hesitation before an unusual strategy placing white students' protesters between them and black students.

On the **22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015**, students march to Luthuli House (Headquarter of the African National Congress – ANC, the ruling party) to hand over a memorandum of students demands.

On the **23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015**, hundreds of thousands students flock to the Union Building to be addressed by the president on the demands of the movement: after hours of discussions with the minister of higher education, vice chancellors and student representatives, the president of the republic of South Africa Mr Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma announces on television that there will be no increase to university fees in 2016 and the formation of a Commission of Inquiry into the feasibility of making Higher Education and Training Fee-free in South Africa.

In **2016, on the 10<sup>th</sup> August**, the honourable Justice Jonathan Arthur Heher, a former judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal leads the "*Commission of Inquiry into the Feasibility of making Higher Education and Training Fee-free in South Africa*" into the beginning of hearings.

On **12<sup>th</sup> August 2016**, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) concludes that 0% fee increase for 2017 would be unsustainable and recommended an inflation related increase.

On the **14<sup>th</sup> August 2016**, calls for students to shutdown Universities flare out on social media.

On the **15<sup>th</sup> August 2016**, protest broke out at university campuses at UKZN and Mangosuthu University of Technology. Private security services and police are deployed on campuses. Violence erupts, and universities are forced to suspend academic programs.

On the **19<sup>th</sup> October 2016**, Dr Nzimande, the minister of Higher Education and Training at the time announced a fee increase capped at 8% and suggested that there could be a way for providing financial assistance to students with annual family incomes below R600 000. The statement was factually suggesting a 0% fee increase for the large majority of students from under-privileged background while hinting at free education for the same majority. Nonetheless, in response, students mobilised at Wits to shut down their campuses.

The campaign turned violent with students throwing rocks, assaulting security personnel, burning vehicles and buildings in most campuses throughout the country. Private security and police violence reached worrying heights with students brutally assaulted, shot with rubber bullets at close range, and other members of the public suffered stray behaviours. Dozens of students including many members of the leadership of student organisations (Student Representative Council - SRC) were arrested and many charged with arson, vandalism, and other damages to property.

By **26<sup>th</sup> October 2016**, most universities have suspended academic programs for the year or were using electronic or alternative (blended learning) means to run final exams. Government announced an increase to university subsidies from 5% to 10.9%; yet fees were set to increase in 2017.

An event involving students of such magnitude was not seen in South Africa since the 1976 bloody Soweto high school students uprising against the imposition of Afrikaans as the language of instruction by the apartheid regime. This time however, students were from all races, from all backgrounds and heavily used social media, in this instance Twitter™, Facebook™ and YouTube™, to deliberate, organise and mobilize for action.

#feesmustfall movement had a reticular and unclear structure which made it difficult for university authorities to act as seen in court orders obtained against more than 12 groupings and individuals

(e.g.: Rhodes must fall, #feesmustfall, #outsourcing must fall, left students' movement, UCT transcollective, SRC, SASCO, PASMA, Patriarchy must fall, EFF students, in addition to specific students or persons) understood to be contributing in the protest throughout the country. But who were the leaders of #Rhodesmustfall and #feesmustfall? Who were their spokespersons? The answer is: no one in particular. That even created an issue with articulating the demand of the movement. Organised student leadership had to catch up and seemed to be a sort of an articulated echo box to the loud noise coming from the crowds. This is not to say that their influence was not noticeable, but to emphasize that they did not really plan for that.

It is suggested that #feesmustfall social movement has inherited from #Rhodesmustfall mass student protest action; the use of social media for organisation, mobilisation and broadcasting; its transformative aims towards greater access to education and to social opportunities; and its ideology of the “*fallist*” (Langa et al., 2017).

## 5.2 Rhodes and his fees must fall: #rhodesmustfall and #feesmustfall

On the **9<sup>th</sup> March 2015**, Chumani Maxwele a student of the University of Cape Town (UCT), in protest of the way he felt the university was treating him, other students and staff of African descent, threw faeces at a bronze statue of the 19th-century British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes gazing thoughtfully upon the city at his feet (Pillay, 2016). Chumani sparked a social movement dubbed RMF or #Rhodesmustfall on social media that swept South African university campuses with protest actions, reignited discussions around decolonisation and social transformation in the country and inspired students at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (UK) to also rise and demand for other statues of the colonialist to be removed (Newsinger, 2016; Pillay, 2016). In South Africa, the movement resulted in the removal of the bronze statue of Rhodes at UCT on the **9<sup>th</sup> April 2015** and set the institution in a path of “decolonisation of education” and “racial transformation”.



Figure 5.1: Removal of the defaced bronze statue of Cecil J. Rhodes at UCT (Source: [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com) - Photograph: Rodger Bosch/AFP/Getty Images - 2015)

RMF has that ideology dubbed of the “fallist” seeing the fall of Rhodes as “a symbol of the inevitable fall of white supremacy and privileges” (Ndelu, 2017). “Fallism” describes social “movements who use the strategy of focusing on one key symbol, issue or figure as a rallying and mobilising point to advance an ideological and political programme directed towards the fall of structures of oppression, exploitation, discrimination, disenfranchisement, exclusion, powerlessness, based on race, class, gender and other forms of social exclusion” (wa Bofelo, 2017). Fallist movements want revolutionary action towards the humiliation of white supremacy and privileges; they have shown distrust in the ANC government which they consider responsible or participant in the sustainability of white supremacy and privileges, and for the dire situation of the young South African non-white (Langa et al., 2017). It was also suggested that RMF activists turned violent, racially intolerant and have lost faith into historical figures of the anti-apartheid struggle, including Nelson Mandela, calling them “sell out” for accommodating the oppressor (Meth, 2017). Many of these activists are still grappling with the fall-out of their dissent whether in court or in continuing their studies or finding employment.

RMF and FMF call for the fall or dismantling of the South African case of settlers-colonialism which they perceive unabated throughout society and especially within the higher education environment.

Fallist movements have bestowed a spontaneous character, a leaderless organisation and a radical discourse which usually characterise new social movements (Castells, 2015).

An important outcome of the “Rhodes and his fees must fall movements” is that *Free education was proclaimed for the previously underprivileged students in South Africa on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2017* paving the way for a greater participation of non-whites (African, Indian, Chinese and coloured) in higher education, whether as students or academics.

## **5.3 Post-apartheid South Africa**

### **5.3.1 The promises of post-apartheid South Africa: The Freedom Charter**

With the end of the apartheid regime and the proclamation of 1996 constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the hopes of all who suffered the apartheid hegemon were in the implementation of the Freedom Charter published by the South African Congress Alliance in 1955. The promises of the Freedom Charter included democratic governance, equality of rights, equality before the law, sharing of countries wealth and land, free education, employment, housing, security and comfort (ANC, 1955). Unfortunately, these post-apartheid promises proved hard to realise.

### **5.3.2 #feesmustfall as a service delivery protest**

The African National Congress (ANC) government launch an impressive all out array of reforms and affirmative actions including the establishment of democratic institutions, the reorganisation of all sectors of society around liberal democratic principles of fairness, freedom and equality; and the deployment of infrastructure, continuing with the implementation of the National Development Plan 2030 of South Africa (National Planning Commission, 2012; Ndebele, 2000; Republic of South Africa, 1996). Even though the achievements of the ANC are remarkable, 20 years after it came to power, the shadow of apartheid is still haunting the place: with its geographical physical design (e.g.: roads separating white communities from others); the land that was misappropriated is still not restituted;

access to capital almost entirely in favour of whites; access to quality education is still resiliently skewed towards the white male; scarcity of non-white academics at university; scarcity of non-whites in many economically favoured professions; scarcity of non-whites in executive positions; and across board scarcity of female representation in leading positions (Fairbank, 2015; Kotze, 2018; Langa et al., 2017; Naicker, 2016). The promises of the Freedom Charter still feel out of reach while the chains of colonialism seem to cling onto the flesh of the *black-child*.

As if it was not enough, under the condition of democracy, the ANC, now the governing political party is offering a worrying face of intra-elite conflict sanctioned with political killings, factionalism which helps to spawn new opposition parties, and the consequent weakening of state institutions in favour of unaccountable corrupt vested interest groups.

Disappointed with the complexity and red-tape encumbered formal administrative and political avenues, disgruntled community members have been regularly staging violent service delivery protests to have their grievances heard; since the administrative and political elite had proven more responsive to violence or threat of violence. It wouldn't be far-fetched to suggest that service delivery protests have created a precedent and a culture of demonstration against the authorities of the day; a culture stretching out from the struggle against apartheid (Twala, 2014). Moreover, it wouldn't be far-fetched to suggest that #eesmustfall was a service delivery protest of national scale.

### **5.3.3 The chains of the Born-free**

#### **a) *The chains of the Born-free: To be young and South African (black, white, and otherwise)***

The "*Born-frees*" form a section of the South African population of young adults born on or after 1994 when apartheid formally ended (Mattes, 2012; Reddy, 2004, 2006). It is suggested that the concept of *born-frees* was developed to support a view of a triumphant liberal democratic system which would have established an egalitarian, racially equal and pluralist society (Rainbow Nation) by casting away the shackles of apartheid and its racialised capitalist social order (Mabasa, 2017; Reddy, 2006).

They are a generation of South Africans who never experienced the oppression of the apartheid system and wouldn't have any personal memory of the struggle against it. They represent about one quarter of the electorate aged between 18 and 24 years (Qwerty, 2018; Statistics SA, 2017; Stats SA, 2017). Nevertheless, they are confronted by a constellation of challenges which may make them regard actual governments and institutions aversely, especially issues regarding higher education policies and practices (Reddy, 2004).

The legacy of apartheid is a racially and ethnically fragmented higher education which has turned into a financially and knowledge divided system reinforcing the enduring apartheid era fragmentation. The student reality is that the effect of the South African *transplacement* into post-apartheid failed to provide for the promise of free and decolonise education suggested in the Freedom Charter as a condition for real freedom (Reddy, 2006). It is argued that over 20 years into democratic South Africa, non-white South Africans still lag behind whites in terms of accessing university, graduating and finding an employment (Reddy, 2004, 2006). Non-white students face tremendous financial challenges, must undergo the undermining of institutional cultures, and do not receive an education

relevant to African realities. White, Indian middle class and increasing numbers of coloured students graduating from resource-rich schools have an easier access to university in comparison to less affluent non-whites stopped by the ever increasing cost of higher education for families have made it impossible (Globalstudentvoice, 2016).

The result was the inability of universities to generate the much-needed non-white competent elite to adequately occupy the many social roles sustaining the country's ambitions; contributing in perpetuating the imbalances of the past. It also meant inability for the country to curb unemployment and allow most young South Africans to escape the creeping state of wretchedness.

#### **b) *The Rainbow Nation***

It is suggested that Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu coined the expression in an attempt to describe a vision of the post-apartheid South African society (Tutu, 1994). The term is later reinforced during a televised interview by Nelson Mandela. That metaphoric narrative encompassing an idea of unity in diversity or multiculturalism and an idea of the end of hardship (or heavenly judgement), has been used to inform and reinforce the ANC vision of nation building.

### **5.4 South African main discourses and paradigms during #feesmustfall**

Main stream discourses during #feesmustfall in South Africa were structured along the lines of Free and Decolonised Education, Fallism, Black Consciousness, National Democratic Revolution, the Born-Free, the Rainbow Nation, colonial capitalism, Liberal Democracy, Convergence Culture (See section 3.5.7), Globalisation (See section 3.5.9) and the social media paradigm in South Africa.

#### **5.4.1 Discourse on Free and Decolonised Education: discourse of the anti-apartheid struggle**

The discourse of Free education can be traced back to the Freedom Charter setting out the transformative objective of education at no cost to all South Africans (ANC, 1955). Completely free education for all is an ideal and a revolutionary promise of the African National Congress (ANC) as one of the conditions without which *black* South Africans would not achieve freedom.

The imagery of the struggle for free education usually refers to the Soweto Uprising of 16<sup>th</sup> June 1976 which saw the massacre of high school students demonstrating against the imposition of Afrikaans as the language of tuition. These heroic pupils overcame their precariousness to stand against the colonial hegemonic racist system of apartheid furthering their alienation. #feesmustfall discourse reminisces and appropriates the bravery of that generation. An iconic picture by late photographer Sam Nzima showing Mbuyisa Makhubu 18-year-old carrying 12-year-old Hector Pieterse shot by police, and Antoinette Pieterse (now Sithole), Hector's sister, running beside him, tells a macabre story of bravery and ultimate sacrifice (See Figure 5.2).



Figure 5.2: 1976 Soweto Uprising (Photograph by Sam Nzima, 1976)

Using an imagery from the photograph also known as “*The Vulture and the little Girl*” by Kevin Carter published in the New York Times on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1993 (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1996), the *black student* acknowledges its precariousness as a metaphorical *black-child prey to the vulture*; the poor *black-child* left to die in pain and misery, at the beak of a scavenging bird of prey: neo-colonial capitalism.



Figure 5.3: The vulture and the little girl (Photograph by Kevin Carter, 1993)

#### **5.4.2 Discourse of Fallism**

Fallism: Its discourse opposes neoliberal capitalist exploitation and 'new imperialism' while carrying the themes of de-commodification, de-coloniality, intersectionality, solidarity and anti-sectarianism (Kotze, 2018; Ndelu, 2017; wa Bofelo, 2017). It has adopted a non-partisan political stance, black consciousness, Pan-Africanism, black feminism and queer politics as its ideological frame (wa Bofelo, 2017). Fallism was suggested to be an embodiment of "a rejection of the post-apartheid condition" (Lester, Osborne, & Smith, 2017).

Fallism demands *free and decolonised education* out of a perception of abjection bestowed upon Africans. It alleges that South African institutions of higher learning continue the oppression of African minds through favouring western knowledge and euro-centric worldview in teaching, and celebrating western thinkers and scientist, while undermining African achievements (Kotze, 2018).

#### **5.4.3 Discourse of Black Consciousness**

Black Consciousness is presented as an attitude and a way of life, calling on all black people to rally around the realisation of the darkness of their skin as the cause of their oppression in order to act in accord to rid themselves of the shackles binding them to perpetual servitude (Biko, 1978). Black Consciousness has defined the non-white South African student discursive landscape as an anti-thesis to racist and racially underpinned liberal ideologies, economically and socially since the mid-1970 (Reddy, 2004, 2006, 2009). It sees socio-cultural relations in terms of a violent racial conflict with the hegemonic racial forces of colonialism.

Black Consciousness aligns with decolonisation projects reclaiming an authenticity de-linking from neo-colonial, neoliberal and capitalist socio-cultural euro-normality (epistemic disobedience), excavating local concepts, and establishing new concepts (Biko, 1978; Mabasa, 2017; Mbembe & Nuttall, 2004; Mignolo, 2009, 2017; Ndebele, 2000).

#### **5.4.4 Discourse of National Democratic Revolution**

The national democratic revolution (NDR) is a program of the South African Communist Party (SACP), an allied of the ANC. The NDR was conceived as a socialist ideology of Marxist-Leninist inspiration aiming at defeating repressive and colonial regimes (Slovo, 1988). The program carries a socialist/communist discourse looking at society through the lens of a class struggle (Cronin, 1986). It mainly fails to adequately deal with race, ethnicities and other collectivist categories beyond the system of class (proletariat/workers and capitalist) (Hudson, 1986). Yet it has had an important influence over the policies of the governing ANC.

#### **5.4.5 Discourse of colonial capitalism**

The white supremacist colonial discourse with its entitlement upon emotions, competence, land and capital in the production and exchange of value in society has sprung under liberal democratic South Africa with:

- A narrative of white sensitivity, disempowerment and discrimination;

- A narrative of black government failure emphasising the corruption, violence, incompetence, lack of vision and lack of leadership of non-white and female leadership (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1996).

The practice of the colonial unconscious: It has been argued that with the end of the apartheid era, and the outlaw of coloniality, whites in South Africa unconsciously persisted in their colonial ways, measuring the difference between blacks and whites based on the possession of capital and expertise (Hudson, 2013). It suggests that an important part of the white South African socio-cultural conditioning is based on repressed coloniality. Repressed coloniality or colonial unconscious expresses itself in the emotional commentaries of white anxiety and guilt, white exceptionalism in relation to non-whites (and especially blacks) and in biased practices and behaviours (Jokes and hate speeches) in socio-cultural spheres where their economic and scientific affluence is dominant (Ezra, 2000; Harootunian, 1999; Hudson, 2013).

#### **5.4.6 Discourse of Liberal democracy in South Africa**

Liberalism represents a set of principles organising economic, political and ideological discourse. The discourse of liberalism favours reforms, free competition and a self-regulating market environment.

Ideologically, Liberalism claims that social relations are better organised through the formal freedom of choice of free and rational actors advancing their individual interests in a social system which values and encourages that.

Neoliberalism encourages market-led economic and social restructuring; implying for governments to privatise, liberalise and impose commercial criteria in its processes (Jessop, 2002).

*“As a new economic project oriented to new conditions, neoliberalism calls for: the liberalization and deregulation of economic transactions, not only within national borders but also—and more importantly—across these borders; the privatization of state-owned enterprises and state-provided services; the use of market proxies in the residual public sector; and the treatment of public welfare spending as a cost of international production, rather than as a source of domestic demand.” (Jessop, 2002, P454)*

The convergence culture globalisation underpinning the social media industry is geared around the principles of neoliberalism. The usage of social media services and platforms is expected to be mediated and framed with respect to neoliberal values and ideas

The liberal democratic discourse of freedom and equality: socio-political empowerment of individuals with the ideal of free and equal humanity with the guaranty of the freedoms of thoughts, speech, association, religion, to vote and hold public office, the right to hold property, identification, political (constitution – bill of rights), and the freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure under the rule of law.

The 1996 constitution of South Africa which resulted from the transplacement transition negotiations to end apartheid upholds liberal democratic values while trying to counterbalance the excesses of that ideology with “Chapter 9” democratic institutions safeguarding the interest of the people.

## **5.5 Social media usage amongst the young**

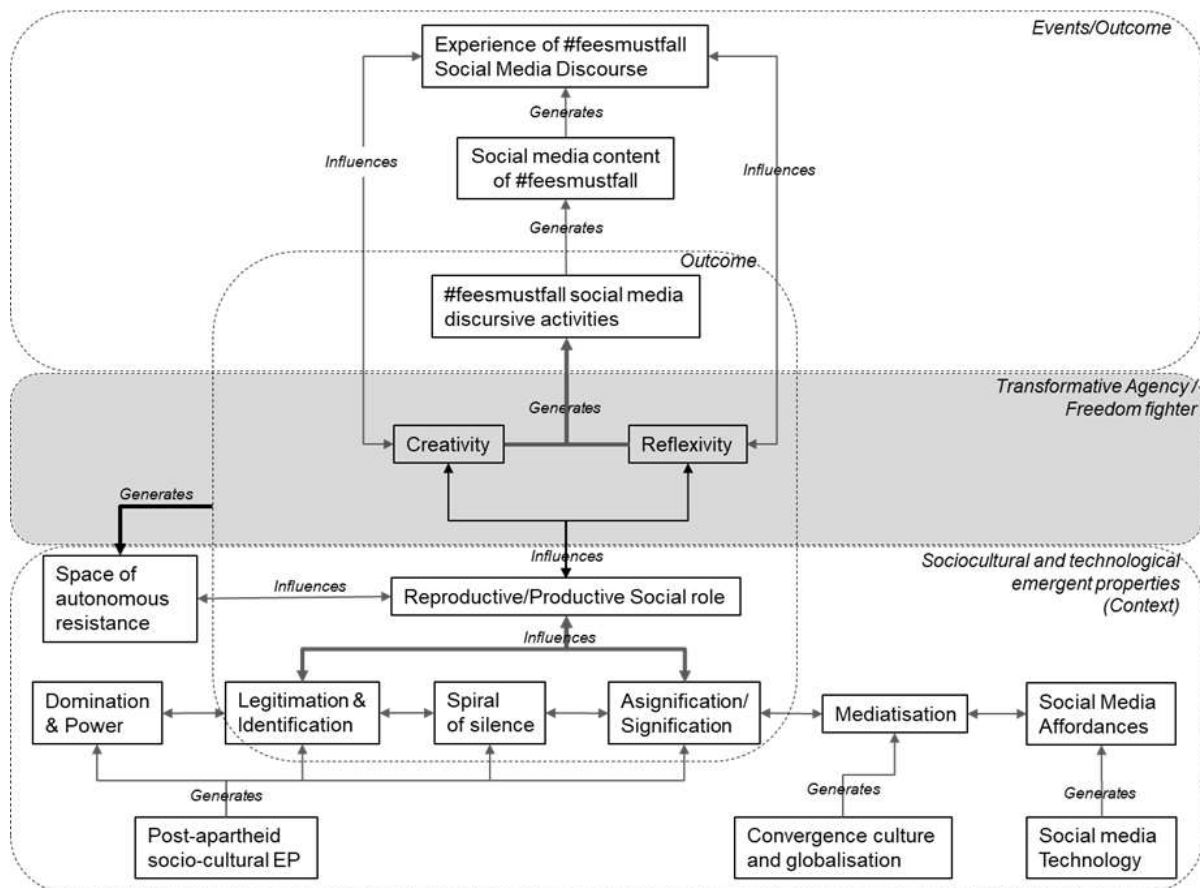
The developing country South Africa, has seen an increasing use of social media for political discussions between all stakeholder groups of public participation (IPSOS, 2013; Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2014). Local, provincial and national governments are developing their social media presence and inviting contributions from the public; NGOs and political parties are using social media to engage with community members; Businesses are building relationships with their customers over them; and individuals have appropriated them to communicate with relatives and other stakeholders of public participation (Laban Bagui & Bytheway, 2013; Rambe & Bere, 2013; Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2014). All these stakeholders perceive social media to be worth their while in their attempts to influence the policy process.

The young South African has made of social media their primary source of information and their most important means of communication (Chuma, 2014; Correa, Hinsley, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2010; Donner & Gitau, 2009). It has become clear that the easiest way to reach them is by entering the social media space where they spend most of their time, consuming all kinds of information while creating and maintaining dynamic social networks (Gachago & Ivala, 2015; Ivala & Gachago, 2012). As mobile phones have become mainstream with more SIM cards in circulation than there are people in the country, Mobile Instant Messaging (MIMs) platforms have also gone mainstream (Chuma, 2014). The South African favourite social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube with WhatsApp on a fast rise (Patricios & Goldstuck, 2018).

## Chapter VI: The case of the social media discursive enactment of #feesmustfall social movement

This chapter presents an exploratory case study of the social media discourse of South African community members during the #feesmustfall social movement. This critical realist exploratory case study explores the relationships between the discourse deployed, observed social media events/outcomes, the transformative agency / agential impetus which drove South African community members and the contextual socio-cultural and technological emergent properties which gave rise to them (See Figure 6.1). This chapter answers research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the empirical and exploratory research phase. (See sections 1.4 and Table 4.1). The findings from the case are arranged to present:

1. The main discourse of the social media campaign as it is performed over the platform Twitter™. The description of the discourse on social media as practice is broken down into its meaning, material, and competence components, coming together to give rise to an irreducible and relatively autonomous entity. (See section 6.2)
2. The events/outcomes on social media emphasising community members *experience of discourse on social media* (around empowerment, satisfaction and concerns), the generated *content, discursive activities, and strategic orientation of messages* intentionally enacted after being creatively reflected upon in internal conversations. (See section 6.3)
3. The agential impetus of South African community members which emerged from the interaction between agents' *internal conversation* and their *identification* into *legitimate roles, asignification/signification of discourses*, the enabling and constraining *affordances of social media*, their opinion silencing under the *power and dominance* of local authorities and the *mediatization* of convergent global forces creeping down their minds. (See section 6.4)
4. The contextual socio-cultural and technological emergent properties of the *post-apartheid system, convergence culture and globalisation* and *social media technology* as they generate tendencies of *dominance, spiral of silence, legitimation/identification, mediatization, asignification/signification* and *social media affordance*. (See sections 6.5 & 6.6)
5. South African online discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance (See section 6.7 and Figure 6.1)
6. Emerging propositions and postulating a realist model of social media discursive action – ReMDA (See sections 6.8 & 6.9)



**Figure 6.1: The Realist Model of social media Discursive Action during #feesmustfall**

**NB:** Entities and objects suggested in the model are positioned according to the principle of ontological priority assumed in Critical Realism (See section 2.1) and in the realist social theory (See section 3.9). As a consequence, *Context* is prior to *transformative agency*, which is prior to *social media content* and to the *experience* of it.

—→ Single arrows represent generational causal relations between entities or objects

↔ Double arrows represent dialectical relationships of influence between relational emergent properties (complementary/compatible or contradictory/incompatible with local spatiotemporal circumstances).

## 6.1 #feesmustfall in South Africa

### 6.1.1 The discourse of networked everyday resistance

#feesmustfall was a social movement led by South African higher education students demanding for the advent of free and decolonised higher education. The movement enjoyed an impressive social media campaign and succeeded in mobilising students from all institutions of higher learning in South Africa. It resulted in the presidential announcement of the implementation of free education in South Africa on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2017. This case study analyses the discourse deployed on the social media platform Twitter™ at the height of demonstrations as a dialectical social practice aiming at changing *students qua black-child qua freedom fighter* social conditions. That discourse of resistance is permeated by socio-cultural and technological impingement mediated by South African university

students' agential impetus as they wear the “*freedom fighter*” identity to challenge the hegemony allegedly upheld by authorities supposedly committed to their wellbeing (See Figure 6.1).

The discourse of resistance on social media bestows the workings of *asignification* as the direction of meaning changes territory and strata of expression, and lands on new grounds befitting the spirit of #feesmustfall claims (Beck, 2016): the grounds of the *student qua black-child qua Freedom Fighter*.

### 6.1.2 The data

The case research presented here was derived from the data collected about the emergent usage of social media during #feesmustfall. The data included:

#### a) *Twitter™ posts*

Twitter posts constituted the main data for the research. For this corpus, hashtags including #feesmustfall, #feesmustfall2016, #fees2017, #nationalshutdown, #unionbuilding, #cput, #tut, #uckar, #uct, #vut, and #wits led to the collection of 7778 posts in 2015 and 43480 posts in 2016. A sample of 539 original Twitter posts was considered for analysis.

1936 out of 7778 posts and 12033 out of 43480 contained actual messages (about 25% of all Twitter™ posts). Only 80 out of 1936 and 459 out of 12033 were actual posts with more than 5 RT (Representing about 1% of all Twitter™ posts). That set of 1% of all collected tweets was responsible for over 75% of all re-tweets represented the sample considered for the research into #feesmustfall.

**Table 6.1 Sampling of Twitter posts**

	<b>#Feesmustfall 2015</b>	<b>#Feesmustfall 2016</b>
Total tweets collected	7778	43480
Actual Tweets	1936	12033
Actual Tweets not retweeted	1474	9422
Most popular tweets and research sample RT ≥ 5	80 – (1.02 % of collected Tweets)	459 – (1.05% of collected Tweets)

#### b) *Interviews*

13 individuals who were social media users and students at South African universities during the events of #feesmustfall in 2015 and 2016 were interviewed to collect their experience of using social media during #feesmustfall events (See section 4.5.2).

#### c) *Documents*

Various documents were consulted mainly including the constitution of the republic of South Africa, the Freedom Charter, constitution of main political parties in parliament (ANC, DA and EFF), acts of law relevant to higher education and employment in South Africa, various accounts of events around the continent in Newspapers and social and economic reports, as well as a number of websites and online platforms relevant to the movement and mainstream narratives, ideologies and discourses (See Appendix A5 for a list of most relevant ones).

These documents were collected according to themes suggested by the research's conceptual framework (See section 3.10.4, Table 3.9 and Figure 3.6) and thematically analysed according to registers and narratives (See section 6.3.4b) drawn from the Twitter posts and interview data.

## 6.2 The discourse of resistance of #feesmustfall over Twitter™

#feesmustfall discourse of resistance over Twitter™ is based on resources, social media users' discursive competences/skills and on the meaning conveying the struggle for a desired society allowing access to free and decolonised education to the student qua *black-child* qua *freedom fighter* against the post-apartheid *status quo* estimated oppressive and illegitimate. This section answers the question: *What is the social media discourse performed by South African community members during social movements?*

### 6.2.1 Meaning in #feesmustfall discourse

Meaning in the discourses of #feesmustfall was deployed following determining genres and registers drawn to satisfy authors and audiences initiatives and interests. The application of these syntagmatic and paradigmatic signifying schema created 3 main lines of discourse: a *discourse of the identity of the black-child*, a *discourse of the oppression of the black-child* and a *discourse of the black-child's struggle for free and decolonised education* (See Figure 6.2). These 3 lines of discourses were geared around the circumstances of a paradigmatic *black-child* who has risen to demand for parents' promises to be met; as he/she was rising, the *black-child* became a *freedom fighter*.

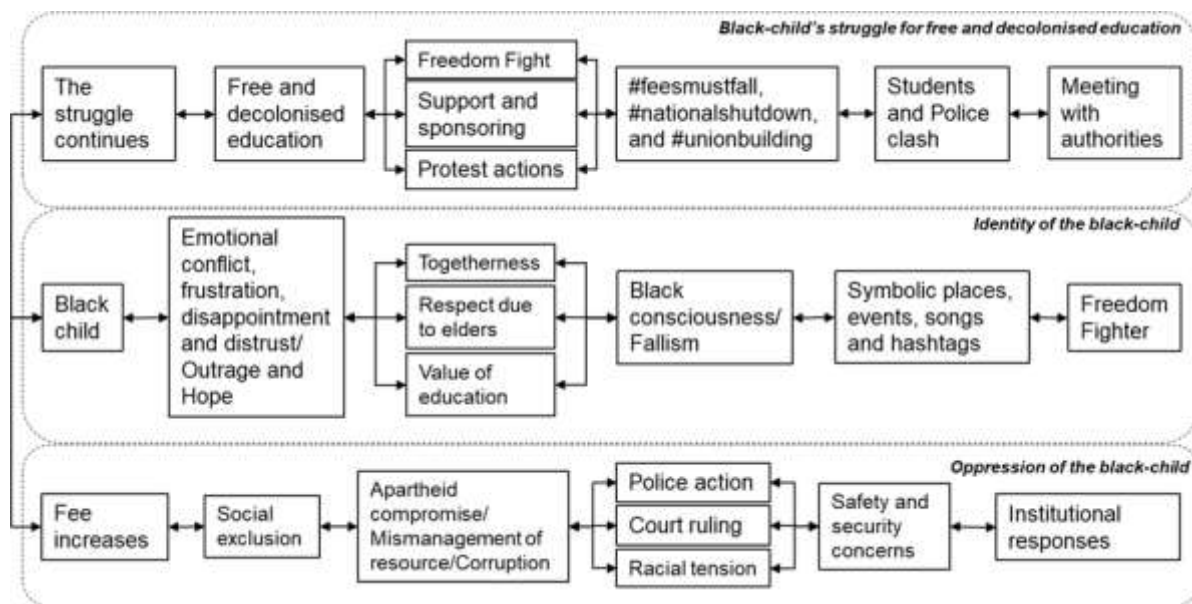


Figure 6.2: Discourses and main registers on Twitter™ during #feesmustfall

At an abstract level of expression, during #feesmustfall, the narratives of Twitter™ posts projected a multidimensional interlace of meaning geared around the *black student* manifesting the symbolic *black-child* as a master signifier. Using an imagery resonating with the photograph also known as “*Struggling Girl*” by Kevin Carter published in the New York Times on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1993 (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1996), I argue that the black student carries something of the *black-child prey to the vulture*, the poor black-child left to die in pain and misery, at the beak of a scavenging bird of prey suggested by fallism to be neo-colonial capitalism. It is the most powerful symbol of the #feesmustfall movement as it legitimises the outrage, the claims for a dignifying life and makes it right (legitimate) to

rise against what was once right (the advent of the post-apartheid era) but seems to have been corrupted. The black-child for whom the *Freedom Charter* paved a way for education and opportunities which the post-apartheid era failed to deliver. The *black-child* against whom authorities, can't do much without acting against their legitimacy and power. This is a situation where the weak is more powerful in virtue of its weakness.

#### **a) *The discourse of the black-child identity***

The discourse of the "*black-child identity*" signifies the *black-child* as the black student of higher education in Twitter™ posts during #feesmustfall. The black student is destitute and in pain, living of handouts from sympathisers, supporters and sponsors. He/she is emotionally conflicted, frustrated, disappointed, outraged but still hopeful: the *black-child* is now a black conscious and rebellious "Fallist" rejecting the post-apartheid condition. This *black-child* has risen, has occupied the places of learning (University campuses), and is walking the revolution of Biko, Luthuli and Mandela to the seat of parliament and government; demanding the conditions of the promised freedom: demanding "*free and decolonised education*": he/she is now a *freedom fighter*. That black-child sees in the police and private security apparatus (Nyalas) that he/she faces, the manifestation of the scavenging and preying hand of the neo-colonial capitalist bent on keeping him/her in subjugation and suffering.

The discourse of the identity of the black-child is characterised by the use of:

- *opinion, emotion and concern sharing genre; information sharing genre* bestowing an informative opinion move;
- *online mobilisation/calls and pledges genre* with an identification move;
- the *RT genre and the reader's genre*.

Its main registers include

- student qua *black-child*,
- Emotional conflict
- frustration, disappointment and distrust,
- Togetherness, respect due to elders, and the value of education
- Black consciousness / Fallism
- Symbolic places, events, songs and hashtags (#feesmustfall, #nationalshutdown, etc.),
- Freedom Fighter

The intertextuality of this discourse registers facilitate tracing their roots to various documents including the Bible, the Freedom charter, the Bill of rights, white papers on education policy, ANC constitution and conference declarations, the constitution of the EFF and the Fallist manifesto. The discourse of the black-child identity is deployed in this twitter posts:

Dear Black-child at #Wits #NMMU #UCT #CPUT #VUT #UKZN #Feesmustfall  
<https://t.co/r0P0hdPUSI>  
[9 - @BlackAfricanCh - 10-13-2016 17:02:47]

Black-child is born into poverty Direct results of apartheid Denied education Unemployable  
Cycle repeat itself #TheRealWitsStory #wits  
[6 - @Lira2Ora - 10-22-2016 0:21:38]

Pledging solidarity with students #NationalShutDown I support u... #FeesMustFall  
#FreeEducation 🇿🇦🇸🇦 <https://t.co/LzHJ2wBQtY>  
[162 - @Shimza\_dj - 21/10/2015]

Our expectations don't match the reality after 21 years of democracy! #ANCMustFall  
#FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <https://t.co/...>  
[272 - @Lean3JvV - social activist - 22/10/2015]

We have your back South Africa! #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall @RhodesMustFall  
<https://t.co/uBLb3WblaV>  
[633 - @BlakeDontCrack - American social activist - 22/10/2015]

Please RT] Join the revolution tomorrow 🇿🇦🇸🇦🇸🇦🇸🇦 Pretoria/ Durban/ London  
#FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <https://t.co/...> (call to go to the union building)  
[1318 - @Kay\_Angel - Student activist - 22/10/2015]

## **b) The discourse of the black-child's struggle for free and decolonised education**

The discourse of the struggle of the *black-child's struggle free and decolonised education* presents the resilience and resistance of the black-child going through the oppression of failing authorities and the emotional conflict of challenging the elder and the order of the world; as he/she acts in protest, to the cry of #feesmustfall, #nationalshutdown and #unionbuilding, on the way to meet with those “sold-out” to the neo-colonial capitalist (university management and government leadership) holding their future in their beak. The *black-child* celebrates every shred of victory achieved.

This discourse is a discourse as direct action, a contribution to the movement as it contributes to the coordination of the movement by *undermining the legitimacy of post-apartheid authorities* with the provision of emphatic evidence of security services questionable activities taking place on campuses around the country, by arguing against the legitimacy of authorities, by encouraging actions against the post-apartheid situation of higher education and by gathering resources in support for the movement. This discourse undermines police and private security capacity to restore and maintain order by showing them in a light of illegitimate and unfair violence, suggesting a commensurate legitimate reaction on the student part with the many acts of assaults, arson and other damages to property. It allows active users and sympathisers of the movement to redirect efforts in support of offline actions.

This discourse is characterised by the use of:

- *information sharing* genre to report ongoing events and to relay information;
- the *online mobilisation genre* (with an incentivising and mobilisation move) providing instructions and calling for resources;

- the *resource sharing genre* offering advices and various other supportive resource (legal support);
- the *RT genre* and the *reader's genre*.

Its main registers include:

- the struggle continues,
- free and decolonised education.
- Freedom fight
- protest action,
- support and sponsoring,
- hashtags #feesmustfall, #nationalshutdown and #unionbuilding,
- students clash with police,
- and meeting with authorities

The intertextuality of this discourse registers facilitates tracing their roots to guerrilla warfare tactics, the emulation of service delivery and union protest actions (Marikana), as well as everyday resistance actions. The discourse of struggle for free and decolonised education is deployed in these twitter posts:

*21 October 2015 – Parliament, 22 October 2015 - Luthuli House, 23 October 2015 - Union Buildings #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown #Revolution [307 - @AcidElusiveBiko (Now @Kweensazi) – student – 22/10/2015]*

*Shot at for wanting education. This is what it's come down too ♡ #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <https://t.co/vpdsaoQwul> [984 - @MapsMaponyane – TV personality – 21/10/2015]*

*A student has been shot. Now protestors are chasing police away. WARNING: Graphic visuals. #UKZN [1109 - @DasenThathiah – tv reporter eNCA– 22/09/2016]*

*Chaos breaking out at UCT @GroundUp\_News #UCT #Fees2017 <https://t.co/V1GxCV64Sv> [620 - @ashleighfurlong – Journalist @GroundUp\_News (NGO in social justice) - 18/10/2016]*

*Rocks and rubber flying. #UKZN <https://t.co/2moTBeuiGt> [13 - @DasenThathiah - 10-13-2016 11:26:32]*

*WATCH #VUT Student uses a petrol bomb - aiming it at police. #Fees2017 <https://t.co/ecFikf2YRi> [55 - @MarykeVermaak - 10-13-2016 12:04:12]*

### **c) *The discourse of the oppression of the black-child***

The discourse of the *oppression of the black-child* emphasises the fee increases as an unbearable drop of social injustice; a growing injustice keeping the black-child in waithood, unable to achieve adulthood and become an empowered provider and genitor. In authors eyes courts are legitimate and objective mechanisms of arbitration which in themselves are not questionable; their rulings are inescapable. Yet they also seem to see the court as tricked by the forces of the vulture, into harshly reprimanding their bravado. Further, along the way to the Union Building, the rhythm of institutional announcements seems to act like winds at sea, for a moment, enraging the waves in devastating

tornado, when unacceptable offers are presented; and in another moment just pushing the boat softly to shore when a path for an expected outcome is suggested.

This is the discourse of *legitimation of action*. It is characterised by:

- the *opinions, emotions and concerns sharing* genre,
- *information sharing* genre with an information opinion move explaining the reasons for the campaign and emphasising the wrongs done to the black-child;
- the *RT genre* and the reader's genre.

The main registers of this discourse include:

- Fee increases,
- Social exclusion
- Apartheid compromise
- Mismanagement of resources/corruption
- Private security services and police actions,
- Racial tension,
- Court rulings,
- Safety and security concerns
- Institutional responses.

The discourse of the oppression of the black-child is deployed in these twitter posts:

*South Africa DOES NOT have money problems, it has MONEY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS!  
#FeesMustFall #unionbuilding  
[751 - @JustZweli – Business man - 23/10/2015]*

*A student says to cop: "fees are so expensive" Cop replies: "I know, I am also a parent" #Wits  
[321 - @raediology – Journalist at M&G – 4/10/2016]*

*It is clear that there is a show of #force & #crackdown by the #State on the #FeesMustFall  
#protests What is your view to solve it? #Poll  
[129 - @Adamitv - 10-17-2016 22:49:00]*

*A 26-year-old #CPUT student will be appearing in court today. Charged with arson, malicious  
damage to property and attempted murder.  
[31 - @Artii\_M - 10-13-2016 11:35:39]*

*We are inside in dangerous territory #UKZN @News24 #FeesMustFall  
<https://t.co/VyjSq2rXzb>  
[19 - @kaveels - 13-10-2016 11:42:12]*

These 3 discourses speak of the lived experience of the South African higher education students, their struggles and their aspirations. On a national scale, they reflect a move from a discourse of *resistance to the financial and expert hegemon* to a discourse of *socio-economic transformation and globalisation*; a call for action for a significant and meaningful global representation of the country and its people: a call for free and decolonised education.

The 2 most popular Tweets of #feesmustfall in 2015 and 2016 epitomise the movement and suggest the death of an era and the birth of a new one where the idea of race which divides the country is

being considered under the light of the narrative of the Rainbow Nation; while the new enemy is a corrupt hegemonic authority that is out of touch with social realities:

*I'm tearing up. The white human shield. This is both incredibly beautiful and incredibly sad.  
#FeesMustFall  
[1800 - @ThabileMpe – social activist – Feminist – 20/10/2015]*

*A police man saying to another. "I want to resign. How can they make us fight with children."  
#FeesMustFall2016 #UP #sabcnews  
[1943 - @Emeliamotsai – journalist SABC- 11/10/2016]*

### **6.2.2 Material resources used during #feesmustfall Twitter™ campaign**

South African University students had access to various resources allowing them to adequately perform #feesmustfall discourse on social media. These resources included social media platforms, related IT infrastructure, related knowledge and skills, information, and social networks.

Social media platforms: Access to social media platform Facebook™, WhatsApp™, Twitter™, and YouTube™ favoured by all the respondents with differing degrees; especially, in 2015 Facebook™ was the main social medium before Twitter™; That tendency changed significantly with more people posting messages on Twitter™ with videos hosted on YouTube™ in 2016. Further, Android based web clients were the most used *Web apps* in posting during the campaign. WhatsApp™ was favoured throughout #feesmustfall events as an online private exchange platform.

*FMF2: So... But with Facebook could send to the UWC Facebook account and spread the message. I also used my phone to take pictures of the situation and send.*

*Q: On Facebook...*

*FMF2: Yes...*

*FMF3: My favourite, the one that I interact with the most is Facebook. I feel that Facebook that's the way you get your news feed, the video context, the videos that people shoot around the movement itself, the fact that you see police brutality in such magnitude.*

*FMF4: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter now and then. But Facebook I think is my favourite (Laughter)*

*FMF5: My go to is Facebook... Do you consider WhatsApp as social media?*

IT infrastructure: The IT infrastructure involved was mainly pointing at the use of mobile device (See table 6.2). It consisted in cellular networks offering Internet and web services including social media applications onto featured or smartphones and other mobile devices. South Africa is estimated to boast 67% of its population to be unique mobile subscribers (Qwerty, 2018).

Knowledge and skills: Knowledge and skills were of various orders including

- Basic knowledge of the functioning of social media platforms
- The knowledge of written Languages especially English which dominated interactions on social media
- Education, since university students are expected to have past matric or grade 12 or to have had some extensive professional experience; they have displayed an important understanding of socio-cultural and ideological concepts

- Knowledge of south African socio-cultural environment as well as mainstream narratives and discourses (See section 5.4)

Sources of information: Sources of information including local and international mass media houses including the SABC, the eNCA, BBC, Aljazeera, News24, AllAfrica and many online news outlets including activist NGOs and student media Dailymail, Cape Times, Oppidan Press, Vuvuzela as suggested respondents and various Twitter handles with large following.

Social networks: Social media users during #feesmustfall events could access networks of friends and relatives from whom they could derive social capital in terms of information and other opportunities.

**Table 6.2: Most used Twitter clients or App during #feesmustfall in 2015 and 2016**

#feesmustfall 2015	#feesmustfall 2016
- Twitter for Android phones (3146)	- Twitter for Android phones (19096)
- Twitter for iPhone (1602)	- Twitter for iPhone (8174)
- Twitter web client (1084)	- Twitter web client (7576)

### 6.2.3 Discursive competence of #feesmustfall Twitter™ users

#feesmustfall social media protagonist mainly included higher education students, government and higher education governance as authorities, in addition to various individual sponsors and sympathetic organisations (See Figure 1.1). These protagonists bestowed impressive *linguistic skills* manipulating language, genres and registers in deploying their desired meaning. They also showed an important level of cognisance of the technology allowing them to discover and use the affordances of the social media platform Twitter™ into navigating Socio-cultural influences.

The most frequent social tasks afforded by the social media platform and exploited by users included communication or content generation, social networking, and entertainment requiring (See Table 6.3):

- *Technology cognizance* allowing to perceive and exploit social media affordances;
- *Linguistics* competences to manipulate the English language and other languages, genres and registers into deploying a desired meaning aiming at persuading or influencing an audience in 140 characters;
- *Socio-cultural competences* mindful of the diversity of customs in the country in addition of their own concerns and worries.

The possession of these skills and competences allowed authors of Twitter™ posts to exploit social media affordances and perform acts of everyday resistance including collaborating with the movement, citizen journalism to denounce the oppression, and Twitter activism in defiance of authorities.

**Table 6.3: Skills and competences of authors of Twitter posts during #feesmustfall 2015 and 2016**

Skills and competences	Exploited Twitter affordances
Technology cognizance Befriending, unfriending, follow and unfollow Grouping	Combination of <i>Social networking</i> and <i>usability</i>
Technology cognizance Content generation – posting Information search Linguistic competence – interdiscursivity/intertextuality	Combination of <i>communication</i> and <i>usability</i>
Technology cognizance Content forwarding - Quoting	Combination of <i>communication</i> , <i>usability</i> and <i>Virality</i>
Technology cognizance Chatting or discussion – instant messaging Private deliberation Linguistic competence – interdiscursivity/intertextuality	Combination of <i>usability</i> , <i>communication</i> and <i>Immediacy</i>
Technology cognizance Platform and content enjoyment	Combination of <i>Entertainment</i> and <i>usability</i>
Technology cognizance Perception of misfits and workarounds Telephonic calls Status update	<i>Usability</i>
Acts of networked everyday resistance	Affordances
Collaboration – synchronisation of activities	Combination of <i>social networking</i> , <i>communication</i> , <i>virality</i> , <i>immediacy</i> and <i>usability</i>
Citizen Journalism	Combination of <i>social networking</i> , <i>communication</i> , <i>virality</i> , <i>immediacy</i> and <i>usability</i>
Twitter activism - campaigning	Combination of <i>social networking</i> , <i>communication</i> , <i>virality</i> , <i>immediacy</i> , <i>entertainment</i> and <i>usability</i>

### 6.3 #feesmustfall events/outcomes on social media

The events/outcomes on social media emphasising community members *experience of discourse on social media* (empowerment and precariousness), the generated social media content, and discursive activities including strategic orientation of messages intentionally enacted after being creatively reflected-upon in internal conversations (See Figure 6.5).

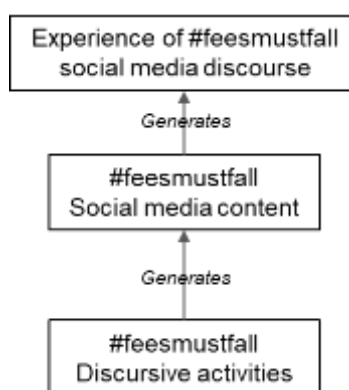


Figure 6.5: Events / outcomes of #feesmustfall discursive actions

### 6.3.1 Experience of the discourse of #feesmustfall over Twitter™

During #feesmustfall social movement, students all over South Africa experienced a sense of *social empowerment* which they expressed by stepping out with social media Twitter™ posts and offline demonstration. Beside that sense of social power was also a deep sense of *precariousness* before a dominant governmental force entangled in corruption, mal-governance and identity crisis; acknowledged as safety and security concerns driven by Socio-cultural conditioning. These experiences of empowerment in the face of precariousness seem to have led to a collective identification with the movement, embodying an *empowered black-child qua Freedom fighter* projected in the discourse of resistance they availed on social media.

#### a) *Social empowerment*

Experienced social empowerment derived from the knowledge of the social media technology artefact (*Technology cognizance*) around which students felt confident (self-esteem); a sense of belonging/affiliation due to shared experiences of hardship caused by the hegemonic system of higher education; and a sense of understanding about how the world works and how to become actor of your own betterment (sense of meaning and learning).

Respondents described their experience of discourse on social media during #feesmustfall as empowering due to:

- The social media technology which experience of usage was considered empowering for its ice-breaking, immediacy in information access and entertainment affordances

*FMF3: I feel that Facebook... that's the way you get your news feed, the video context, the videos that people shoot around the movement itself, the fact that you see police brutality in such magnitude. The fact that you see people posting about how they feel about the situation; from white people to black people: the differences in their opinions in terms of what they are saying. You get a true sense of what particular individuals from a particular background feel about the situation, and what your stance in it.*

*FMF4: I think somehow... for me, I use social media to make myself feel good. Maybe when I am bored, I go to social media and I post these things and everything. I think somehow... also, it empowers me to express myself so that people... I can be out there, they can see me. Some sort of showing yourself to the world, that also I do exist.*

*FMF7: So, for me it's almost like I am trying to get people to think, to get people to think about different issues. Sometimes I rant because... it's something that pisses me off. Then I'd go onto twitter to say, you know, that this is pissing me off. Or I will go on there to say like the moment that I spend with family... stuff like that.*

- A sense of belonging - Affiliation (identification and belonging) because they have a shared experience of the hardship which rising university fees was accentuating as students, parents and alumni.

*FMF1: I feel like we are brothers who are actually fighting for the same thing.*

*FMF3: ... cause like WhatsApp, it is for the people I feel close to me; my friends, my family members..., it is not necessarily directed to my family members, they can take from the message what they will. But maybe my friends will resonate with that, because we are in the same situation.*

**FMF4:** Yes. On WhatsApp. On WhatsApp, I would speak with my friend and also the group that I am part of... So, we speak about our frustration about when the kids will be coming to university, what is going to happen to them and all of that with all this #feesmustfall. And we would post things on WhatsApp.

**FMF7:** I don't think they were people that I could relate to. Because for me, I think, if I'm gonna protest, I'm not gonna burn the very asset that is going to give me the degree that I want.

- A sense of meaning and learning about how the world works. The following quotes highlights the learning of “*how to get what you want*” and the teaching/sharing of the knowledge of the “*black pain*”, as well as the “*cost of carelessly engaging*” with the movement for a *white* student.

**FMF3:** ... Yes, we know this African perspective; but we also went to this education with these white people who also think in a different way. They can challenge opinions. Cause when you go to our class now, the people who speak the most about what they don't like about the course are white people. They are the one that are voicing their opinion strongly: “Oh, we should challenge that... if we don't want the exams to be written this day, we want it that way”. And they get what they want... I understand where it probably comes from now when someone “I may be a black, but I have seen how the system works. If you don't speak you're not gonna get what you want.” ... We subconsciously learn the fact that “ok, this is how these people get what they want... let me do the same. Even though it goes against what my parents taught me: but hey, what my parents have taught me so far isn't working.”

**FMF7:** I think the reason for #feesmustfall was that people were tired. People were tired of being pushed around, people were tired of... the education or the university would just make decisions, financial decisions without consultations. And therefore they were going to show them that actually you must remember where your salary comes from.

**FMF13:** ... I am a student of politics. I grew up within politics. I've always understood certain dynamics within the political sphere. On social media, there were a lot of people who were trying to teach other people and trying to pass some knowledge across to ignorant people: that blacks were denied certain things. So, there was a lot of arguments a lot of people highlighting ‘black pain’, giving their own personal stories and the significance of #feesmustfall.

**FMF8:** ... I shared some other posts by “Rocking the daisies” and how white people had enough money to go and party at those concerts, and people were bringing #feesmustfall signs to this concert. I thought it was funny that at a festival concert they were coming with #feesmustfall signs, whatever, and I thought that connection, how do you even relate it to? But then later, you could see that there is actually a connection between. A lot of students go to these concerts' festivals, so it's a good place. At the time it was just like funny. I can't remember the exact meme... and I shared that, and I actually got some... I got some back-clash for that.

## **b) Precariousness as emotional commentary and safety and security concerns**

Precariousness took the shape of *emotional commentary* where *emotional conflict, frustration entrapment and silencing, outrage and anger*, and *safety and security concerns* declined through the awareness of *social media deceptiveness* as well as of *safety and privacy concerns*. Precariousness carried out the influence of the *spiral of silence* on potential discursive actions.

As emotional commentary: Non-white respondents suggested that they were mainly *conflicted, disappointed, frustrated*, in a perpetual *internal conflict* and in *anger/outrage* due to the limitations which their social background imposed on them.

+++++ Emotional conflict, disappointment and distrust

**FMF3:** *it's a reality bite... they accepted the lesser role. They didn't challenge authority and they got what they got. And you don't want a repeat of that cycle... so, maybe this is the best way to challenge it; but like a part of me will always feel... you know, torn.*

**FMF4:** *Eish... That one. Part of me understood why they were protesting, why they were posting these things... A part of me understood why they did it and a part of me feels that they acted somehow wrongly.*

**FMF10:** *I did one or 2 things. I was losing patience with this whole thing because it was dragging... you know. It was taking so long... and then I was blaming the government for... because the students were losing their patience, man.*

+++++ Frustration, entrapment and silencing

**FMF3:** *... And I think that people, students and especially black students are frustrated to the point where....*

**FMF7:** *I think our minds are not free as much as we are free; our minds are still entrapped by that box. And the systems around us keep us in that box. I mean... I am working for a civil engineering company, but I'm still seen as a black female, disadvantaged. I need to prove myself more than my white male counterparts.*

**FMF8:** *But I think I am a little bit on the other side of the fence to comment on that. On the sense that for a white person to comment, it was very dangerous at the time... So, I thought rather... cause nothing I really say could justify like... nothing I really say is going to help... nothing I really say is going to... even if I agree or disagreed, I am white, my opinion doesn't count. That's kind of my feeling.*

**FMF11:** *People being frustrated for not being able to afford fees. Especially at your universities like your Wits and your UCTs, where you are amongst privileged and especially white people are you realise how socio-economically how imbalanced society is. You don't realise how bad it is until you are with people whose parents can afford to pay a hundred thousand rand a year.*

+++++ Outrage and anger

**FMF7:** *So, for me it's almost like I am trying to get people to think, to get people to think about different issues. Sometimes I rant because it's something that pisses me off. Then I'd go onto twitter to say, you know, that this is pissing me off.*

**FMF11:** *People being frustrated for not being able to afford fees. Especially at your universities like your Wits and your UCTs, where you are amongst privileged and especially white people are you realise how socio-economically how imbalanced society is. You don't realise how bad it is until you are with people whose parents can afford to pay a hundred thousand rand a year.*

**FMF13:** *During #feesmustfall, I think it was anger. Every time I'd post something, I think it would be out of anger. Because, like I said I will be responding to someone who said something who did not know what they were talking about.*

As safety and security concerns through a sense of the *potential deceptiveness of social media* perceived as infiltrated by the hegemon and affiliates; a sense of real *safety and privacy concerns* derived from the racial tension in the country and the potential cost of contravening mainstream narratives. Safety and security concerns had a direct link to the *spiral of silence* generated by the *post-apartheid socio-cultural conditioning*.

#### +++++ Deceptiveness of social media

**FMF3:** *So, like when it comes to posting I feel like “Flip”. In my mind I have this like feeling to say something; but I hold it back for the mere fact that my image right there needs to be protected.*

**FMF6:** *oh now... it has become more and more seclusive as an environment, not as public as you'd want it to be. Because now you are in the era when you are applying for jobs, so... your personal life, things you do... yeah... So, they have a very big effect on what type of job, and employers that would look for you... Now, one must be cautious. It is not as free as one would think it could be: it has an after effect in the long run.*

**FMF11:** *Fake news... and also don't like the concept of like... you know bullying as well. That happens a lot. So that bothers me. So, the online bullying and... like even stuff how people just randomly easily post pornography online... like on Twitter especially.*

**FMF13:** *You see now, I watched how I responded to people; I watched the use of language, because I am a director of a company and I know at some points all those things can reflect on you. I was very very careful about how I would approach certain arguments or debates.*

#### +++++ Security and privacy

**FMF3:** *You know you don't trust a post there. If you see a white guy commenting on fees must fall, in the back of your mind, you're already kind of accepting the fact that this guy is gonna say something that is rather ignorant or rather racist or somewhere in between.*

**FMF5:** *I think coming from a very... from a background a bit conservative where don't have to say, have to say... You don't speak your mind; because It might not always resonate with people.*

**FMF6:** *Eeeih... they were on WhatsApp, but you'd find that WhatsApp was infiltrated because you had lecturers there and you wouldn't want the lecturers or management to know what we were discussing. So, Facebook and our pages... They wouldn't know all the pages*

**FMF8:** *Yeah! That feeling that something might happen to you.*

**FMF11:** *I actually didn't post anything on social media during #feesmustfall. Why? Because it was such like, such a volatile environment. Anything that you would say could be misinterpreted, yeah...*

The experience of #feesmustfall social media during the movement seems to have led to a sort of empowerment in the face of precariousness. As non-whites, mainly blacks, transfigured from *student qua black-child* ridden with frustration and anger into *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* challenging the hegemon. At the same time, white students expressed a sense of entrapment and silencing, even though they were endowed with the privileges of capital. Social media were also experienced as deceptive and rather unsafe as both a strengthening and a weakening medium.

#### 6.3.2 #feesmustfall content over Twitter™

The social media platform Twitter™ was solicited by #feesmustfall protesters in 2015 and much more in 2016. The research engages with the textual content generated by South African higher education students, sympathisers, sponsors and other protagonists of the #feesmustfall movement over Twitter™. This section presents the general content structure, the structure of the 2 most popular posts, the use of keywords and hashtags, and the influence of most popular posts.

### a) **General content structure**

It was observed that most of actual Twitter™ posts (not re-tweets) collected during #feesmustfall campaign were constituted with text, images or videos and hyperlink addresses (URL) to other resources (Articles, images, videos, podcasts, etc.) as claims and evidence of events whether live or otherwise (See Table 6.2), and in line with the cognisance of users' content type preference, common language, and the usability of the social media platform.

In 2015, about 3031 out of 7778 collected Tweets did not contain a URL which is about 39%. In 2016, about 22 176 out of 43 480 collected Tweets did not contain a URL which is about 51% of the total. This suggests that most tweets were opinion sharing posts; while a little more than 40 % of all tweets would be event reports posts.

@Avuxeni\_, @camaripop, @EduFund\_za, @oppidanpress, @reverb\_za, and @thedailyvox produced about 10% of all posts during 2015 #feesmustfall protest.

Interview respondents placed Image/video content types as their favourite when consuming information from Twitter™ (See Figures 6.4 and 6.5) suggesting that such content in a post would cause it to trend, depending on the emotional response the event depicted would create:

**FMF7:** *For me it's pictures and text and I will re-tweet the video that I found enlightening, so but mostly pictures.*

**FMF8:** *I spend a lot of time, most of my time on YouTube watching news videos, news reports. Then, the second most, will be Instagram, so it is consuming of pictures.*

**FMF10:** *I prefer pictures. Because, pictures is like... I prefer pictures because I don't like posting videos.*

**FMF12:** *I don't post very often on social media. I usually post to Instagram and that's like just a picture and I don't really put much of a caption underneath.*

The main language of communication used on Twitter during #feesmustfall was English. English is a second language for most South Africans. It suggests that most authors made a purposeful effort to be intelligible to the greater number by electing to use the language of tuition at South African universities and the most spoken language in formal space; while parsimoniously using mother tongues and too many colloquial idioms or acronyms.

Q: *Were you always writing in English or you were using some...*

**FMF2:** *Mixed... because sometimes, when you are writing using your vernac, some students will find it hard; because we are mixed on campus.*

**FMF2:** *Yes... but most is English because we are used to writing in English and mix Xosa there, there and there... they will make sense at the end of the day... (Smiling)*

Q: *What language did you use on your social media posting during #feesmustfall.*

**FMF11:** *English*

Q: *Why?*

**FMF11:** *Because that's the language that everybody can understand.*

**FMF13:** *For the greater part, I was writing in English. I actually started to get irritated with myself and started writing in IsiXosa then. But it's different when you try to convey a message to a wider audience. If I am speaking Xosa, I am speaking to specific people who know how to speak Xosa, but unfortunately, if I am speaking English, it's to everyone.*

For every Twitter post, the platform was aggregating information about the number of re-tweet and the number of "Like" and "dislike", as part of a broad effort of bringing together, in a unique window, all

available activities generated by an author (See Figures 6.4 and 6.5). Such an effort while allowing authors to have a better view of their own activities also open them to an easy and sometimes inappropriate scrutiny of others, creating a sense of *loss of privacy*.

### b) **Structure of the 2 most popular Twitter posts**

The Twitter post in Figure 6.3 exploits the *information sharing/event reporting genre*, in a *Family laundry / parents against children register*. It provided information on an ongoing protest event as well as the emotional state and the opinion of the author at that moment.

The statement provided “*I’m tearing up. The white human shield. This is both incredibly beautiful and incredibly sad. #FeesMustFall*” is metaphorical and indicative in the present tense of the effect of a striking emotional conflict suggesting the incongruity and incompatibility of the hope and the delusion that are being felt by protesters facing police.

The added picture situates the statement in the context of an ongoing event of #feesmustfall protest involving students and police. It shows police somewhat hesitating at the back, separated from black students at the forefront of the picture, by a line of white students with their hands raised up and crossed with clenched fists: implying readiness to be arrested first before any black student. It is that line of white students which the author calls *white human shield*. The author seems to see some hope (*incredibly beautiful*) of a racially united South Africa in that. But also, there is the disillusion (*incredibly sad*) of black police fighting against black students there.



Figure 6.3: Most popular Tweet of #feesmustfall 2015

The Twitter post in Figure 6.4 also exploits the *information sharing/event reporting genre*, in a *Family laundry / parents against children* register. It provided a quote and a picture of anti-riot police in full gear having a discussion.

The statement “a policeman saying to another” with the quote provided “*I want to resign. How can they make us fight with children?*” is claimed to be a report of the disappointment and plea of an enforcer suggesting that authorities have lost their ways. It suggests an incongruity in the action of authorities by implying that the legitimacy of their actions was questionable while that of protesters’ actions was justified.



**Figure 6.4: Most popular Tweet of #feesmustfall 2016**

The added picture situates the statement in the context of an ongoing event of #feesmustfall protest involving police. It shows anti-riot police personnel discussing amongst themselves while standing on the side of a campus road. A Jacaranda tree in the background points at a campus of the University of Pretoria.

These 2 posts deploy #feesmustfall discourse of the black-child’s struggle for free and decolonised education with a Fallist ideological undertone which rejects the post-apartheid condition as incongruous, incompatible, hegemonic and responsible for the plight of the *student qua black-child*.

They can also be interpreted as a critic or attack on the legitimacy of authorities' actions, from a social activist questioning the black led government motives for their strong repressive stance against the *student qua black-child* legitimate claims and actions.

**c) Keywords and Hashtags**

All or most Twitter™ posts considered in the research contained the keywords *#feesmustfall* and *students/student*; only followed by *#nationalshutdown*, *happening*, *particular* and *Friends/someone* as the most popular meaningful words describing the discourse of the movement over social media (See Table 6.4). These keywords and hashtags presented the demand of the movement, the protest action to be carried out, and the space where reported action is taking place.

The names of social media platforms including Facebook™, WhatsApp™ and Twitter™ in that order were also present as main sources for references.

**Table 6.4: 25 most frequent words in the sampled Twitter™ posts during #feesmustfall 2015 and 2016**

Word	Frequency
#feesmustfall	432
students	202
Facebook	119
#fees2017	101
something	100
student	99
#nationalshutdown	95
WhatsApp	66
twitter	60
laughter	52
happening	51
friends	45
particular	40
someone	39
actually	38
talking	37
@thedailyvox	36
education	35
situation	35
#feesmustfall2016	34
protest	34
understand	34
#unionbuilding	31
university	30

Hashtags were considered as keywords or key phrases allowing to classify or categorise texts around themes and registers. The body of Twitter posts considered in this research into #feesmustfall was found to have 86 main instances of hashtags, of which the 5 most used were #feesmustfall, #ukzn, #fees2017, #nationalshutdown and #wits (See Table 6.5).

#feesmustfall coupled with #nationalshutdown and #feesmustfall2016 or #fees2017 Hashtags signalled affiliation or support for the social movement; while #ukzn, #wits, #tut, #unionbuilding, #vut and #uckar indicated specific geographical locations where a reported action was taking place. They also allowed to get a quick update on the progress of events, by making a search on one keyword or a combination of them.

**Table 6.5: Most used hashtags in the sampled Twitter™ posts during #feesmustfall 2015 and 2016**

Hashtag	Frequency
#feesmustfall	432
#ukzn	111
#fees2017	101
#nationalshutdown	95
#wits	49
#feesmustfall2016	34
#tut	31
#unionbuilding	31
#vut	28
#uckar	27

**d) Influence of most popular Twitter posts**

A Twitter™ post reads like titles of newspaper’s front page. It is an invitation for further exploration of the topic covered in the text of the post through a hyperlink or a search of hashtags. During #Feesmustfall 2015 and 2016, most Twitter™ posts are deployments of the #feesmustfall *discourse of the black-child struggle for free and decolonised education*; signifying deliberate attempts at undermining the legitimacy of government and university authority actions as responsible for the hegemonic situation oppressing the *student qua black-child*. The rhetorical strategy deployed is to share *informative opinions* through influential Twitter accounts (See table 6.7). Table 6.6 presents the most influential Twitter posts during #feesmustfall events in 2015 and 2016.

**Table 6.6: 20 most popular Twitter™ posts during #Feesmustfall 2015 and 2016**

Rank	#Feesmustfall 2015	#Feesmustfall 2016
1	I'm tearing up. The white human shield. This is both incredibly beautiful and incredibly sad. #FeesMustFall [1800 - @ThabileMpe – social activist – Feminist – 20/10/2015]	A police man saying to another. "I want to resign. How can they make us fight with children." #FeesMustFall2016 #UP #sabcnews [1943 - @Emeliamotsai – journalist SABC-11/10/2016 ] <a href="https://mamaponyamotsai.wordpress.com/">https://mamaponyamotsai.wordpress.com/</a>
2	More 5 cops on 1 woman!? We've lost our humanity. The struggle is real in South Africa! #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CR1y3KyXIAEvk bN.jpg">https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CR1y3KyXIAEvk bN.jpg</a> [1425 - @UlrichJvV – Humanitarian anthropologist – 21/10/2015]	Calling progressive lawyers willing to assist with #FeesMustFall matters in all affected university towns. Volunteers pls contact me urgently [1340 - @AdvDali_Mpofu – EFF - 16/10/2016]
3	They're skinning us alive. #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/7BSbTQ7ZYQ">https://t.co/7BSbTQ7ZYQ</a> (this is a pic) [1323 - @AndreiDamane – student – 21/10/2015]	A student has been shot. Now protestors are chasing police away. WARNING: Graphic visuals. #UKZN [1109 - @DasenThathiah – tv reporter eNCA–22/09/2016]
4	[Please RT] Join the revolution tomorrow ☹️☹️☹️☹️ Pretoria/ Durban/ London #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/...">https://t.co/...</a> (call to go to the union building) [1318 - @Kay_Angel – Student activist – 22/10/2015]	There has been more than 600 arrests of #FeesMustFall activists. Let me tell u: u can arrest all of them, but u'll never arrest their ideas! [935 - @MbuyiseniNdlozi – EFF – +19/10/2016]
5	Remember when they said our generation is lost and lazy? #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/Zt41cqVn6U">https://t.co/Zt41cqVn6U</a> (pic of protesting students) [1243 - @Zack_Khambule – Cape town student – 21/10/2015]	Moving Picture of #FatherGrahamPugin of Holy Trinity Church protecting #Wits students who sought shelter in his church. SAPS later shot him! [881 - @MbuyiseniNdlozi – EFF – 11/10/2016]
6	This is why we march!!! Education has the POWER to transform South Africa. #FeesMustFall #UnionBuilding <a href="https://t.co/mSdFbtHh...">https://t.co/mSdFbtHh...</a> [1157 - @Lean3JvV – social entrepreneur – 23/10/2015]	South Africa DOES NOT have money problems, it has MONEY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS! #FeesMustFall #unionbuilding [821 - @JustZweli – 23/10/2015]
7	This is what happened at #UWC. Students did not provoke the police. Video by @News24 #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/...">https://t.co/...</a> [1130 - @DamianHein – student activist – 22/10/2015]	BBC tried to interview students at Rahima Moosa Hospital on graduateing late because of #FeesMustFall. [897 - @Mellz_N – Med school student-26/10/2016]
8	If only the @SAPoliceService were as swift with criminals as they are with our students at the moment #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall [1052 - @moflavadj – TV and Radio personality – 21/10/2015]	"The decolonized national anthem."    #Wits #Fees2017 #FeesMustFall <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/784360393355526144">https://twitter.com/i/status/784360393355526144</a> [823 - @LindokuhlXulu1 – eNCA Journalist - 7/10/2016]
9	Shot at for wanting education. This is what it's come down too ♡️ #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/vpdsaoQwul">https://t.co/vpdsaoQwul</a> [984 - @MapsMaonyane – TV personality – 21/10/2015]	Our country is a mess! #FeesMustFall #PravinGordhan #SABC #SpyTapes #WaterShedding Rand weakening Our President rn: ht... [745 – @Karabo_Mokgoko - 12//10/2016]
10	#FeesMustFall Students against tuition hikes in Cape Town met w/ police tear gas, rubber bullets. #NationalShutDown [937 - @syndicalisms – Student activist – 21/10/2015]	What sort of government does this to students? The government @MYANC is a murderous government #FeesMustFall [725 - @Lazola_Ndamase – SACP -20/10/2016]
Total	<b>12369</b>	<b>9338</b>

The 20 Twitter posts presented in Table 6.6 are worth over twenty thousand (21707) retweets; which is about 42% of all the Twitter posts harvested in 2015 and 2016. They were the most popular and influential posts. These Twitter™ posts were projecting the *discourse of the black-child struggle for free and decolonised higher education*. They were mostly *informative opinions* with an almost obvious persuasive intent to undermine or paint authorities in *illegitimate hegemon*.

**e) Influential authors**

The most influential Twitter account during #feesmustfall events was @thedailyvox; which is the official Twitter handle of “The Daily Vox”, a youth run and oriented media outlet which appropriated the cause for Free and Decolonised education.

Such Twitter accounts or handles were associated with media outlets and influencers updating their followers on ongoing student protest, student activists as citizen journalists bringing live reporting of events to their networks, and student organisations and education NGOs calling, instructing and motivating protesters for resource and action (See Table 6.7).

Numbers of followers and most re-tweeted post suggest a correlation between the influence of an author and the popularity of their message. These numbers also imply that many readers and contributors trusted the information shared by popular media outlets and eye-witness authors with an important following and were keen to pass it unto their networks (See Table 6.6 and 6.7).

Table 6.7 presents most influential Twitter handles (accounts) in terms of the number of most re-tweeted posts.

**Table 6.7: Most influential handles in the sampled Twitter™ posts during #feesmustfall 2015 and 2016**

Twitter™ Handle	No of Followers	No of most re-tweeted Posts >= 5	Themes and Keywords	Most quoted Twitter™ post
@thedailyvox (Newspaper)	21650	36	#Wits, Students; #Feesmustfall; stopped by student; read books, not burn them	#Wits Students tried to burn books inside the Matrix but were stopped by student who told them to read books, not burn them #FeesMustFall [64 – 13/10/2016]
@dasenthathiah (Photo journalist - Durban)	4013	26	#UKZN	#UKZN <a href="https://t.co/PFCTYihRZ9">https://t.co/PFCTYihRZ9</a> [36 - 13/10/2016 – Video of smoking building – over 1000 views]
@oppidanpress (News outlet - Grahamstown)	4625	25	Police; fully kitted in riot gear; Street intersection;  #UCKAR, #Fees2017, #FeesMustFall	Police are fully kitted in riot gear at the Prince Alfred/South Street intersection. #UCKAR #Fees2017 #FeesMustFall [27 – 22/10/2016]
@jacanews (Jacaranda News - News outlet - Pretoria)	192 037	20	WATCH; #VUT; Student; petrol bomb; police;  @MarykeVermaak	WATCH #VUT Student uses a petrol bomb - aiming it at police. #Fees2017 @MarykeVermaak <a href="https://t.co/enkPjU5l0h">https://t.co/enkPjU5l0h</a> [26 – 13/10/2016 – video of petrol bomb throwing and use of mattresses as shield – over 1000 views]
@witssrc (student organisation at Wits university - Johannesburg)	26995	16	Police, shooting at students, random, snake #FeesMustFall	The police are shooting at students, workers and staff at random. The snake that eats itself. #FeesMustFall [71 – 13/10/2016]
@kaveels (Journalist @News24 – Durban)	880	15	#UKZN student; building is on fire;  @News24 #FeesMustFall	The #UKZN student services building is on fire @News24 #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/SrHxzPWTEb">https://t.co/SrHxzPWTEb</a> [70 – 13/10/2016 – over 7000 views] (same events as @dasenthathiah)
@ann7tv	75073	11	#FeesMustFall, Video, Police, UKZN	Video: Heavy police presence at UKZN   <a href="https://t.co/mByoEcKsYV">https://t.co/mByoEcKsYV</a> #FeesMustFall #DSTV405 <a href="https://t.co/KmeKC3nTwi">https://t.co/KmeKC3nTwi</a>
@emeliamotsai (Journalist SABC)	1272	11	police man; #FeesMustFall2016 #UP #sabcnews	A police man saying to another. "I want to resign. How can they make us fight with children." #FeesMustFall2016 #UP #sabcnews [1943–11/10/2016]
@ewnreporter	378 342	11	#TUT; #Fees2017; police; student; shot with live ammunition	#TUT #Fees2017 police have opened a attempted murder case at TUT where a student has been shot with live ammunition. <a href="https://t.co/pozCTYJQdz">https://t.co/pozCTYJQdz</a> [253 – 13/10/2016 – pic of medical emergency personel and car on campus]
@judithsubban	2166	10	#UKZN a student; Attacked; private security	#UKZN a student claims he was attacked by private security. He has been hurt on his ear. <a href="https://t.co/AshRn9u5ay">https://t.co/AshRn9u5ay</a>
@mailandguardian	642 349	5	#feesmustfall crisis; bonus cut; fund students	While #FeesMustFall 'crisis' hits varsities, Unisa's top staff have taken a R10-million bonus cut to fund students. <a href="https://t.co/Qw6UeJDgwa">https://t.co/Qw6UeJDgwa</a>

### 6.3.3 #feesmustfall discursive activities on social media as everyday resistance

South African students were involved in various discursive activities during #feesmustfall; the bulk of which was meant at contributing to the movement. Their engagement appeared very personal; without a central coordination but with a provocative tone as acts of “everyday resistance”. On Twitter™, contributors to #feesmustfall engaged in:

- Freedom Fight including social media activism (Mobilisation, campaigning and resource sharing); Content forwarding; online and offline private deliberations; and offline protest
- Citizen journalism

Freedom Fight was performed in support of the #feesmustfall social movement (defined by the legitimacy of its claims, the resources derived from sponsors and donors, and by offline protest actions) by engaging in private deliberation, persuading followers, challenging authorities, and activism with mobilisation, campaigning and resource sharing. In the following extracts, respondents discussed their online resource raising, persuasion of followers and offline deliberations:

#### +++++ Persuasion of followers

*FMF2: There were sponsors who were sponsoring students who stayed on campus. So, during the protest there were no likely or no normal people who cooked and supplied food on campus.*

*FMF13: To educate people. People need to be a lot more socially aware of the predicament certain people are in.*

*FMF6: It was to make people aware and to concretise people... because there are people who are ranting... So, why not. I preach to my people, so that my people know that “ok... it’s not only the opinion of the people who are ranting”.*

*FMF7: My intentions were to highlight... from somebody who was studying... kind like “Why are they burning stuff...” so, my intention was to get answers, to let people know how unfair it was for people who actually wanted to learn.*

#### +++++ Offline deliberations

*FMF4: The only need that I saw was to discuss it with my friends, like my colleagues, you know... but posting something regarding that I didn’t see any.*

*FMF7: I think it’s both an act of rebellion, because you are wanting people to maybe see the truth that is not posted on the news.*

*FMF8: But I didn’t take part like... if it comes up at university, don’t bring it up, don’t engage too much. Talk with the friends off campus, not on campus.*

*FMF13: ...I was with a partner who was very very involved, so I will discuss a lot of the things with her, we will have our arguments, we will share our views and things like that... These discussions never stopped.*

#### +++++ Activism

*Free education is possible! #NationalShutDown will deliver it. no compromises, no negotiations, no deals. #FeesMustFall*  
[5 - @R3azzy - 2015-10-23]

*This is why we march!!! Education has the POWER to transform South Africa. #FeesMustFall #UnionBuilding <https://t.co/mSdFbtHh...>*  
[1157 - @Lean3JvV – social entrepreneur – 23/10/2015]

*Guys. We're meeting at the Concourse at 12pm. Please spread the word. #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown*  
[27 - @Anele\_Nzimande - 2015-10-24]

*0% increase is a victory, but fees will only really have fallen when education is free for all #FeesMustFall #FeesHaveFallen #unionbuilding*  
[24 - @mojoLOL - 2015-10-23]

*Calling progressive lawyers willing to assist with #FeesMustFall matters in all affected university towns. Volunteers pls contact me urgently*  
[27 - @AdvDali\_Mpofu - 10-16-2016 3:32:40]

*Make your way to the Great Hall stairs for a vigil against police brutality #FeesMustFall <https://t.co/PwSF1TFvzU>*  
[13 - @WitsSRC - 10-23-2016 19:42:18]

Citizen journalism often offered an image (picture or photo) or video of the event as evidence. It was usually supported by another post of another "eye witness". A post was challenged when other users could not confirm claims about events observed from a different angle. Citizen journalists tend to cover events taking place in specific areas or campuses while relaying national or other significant events from other sites (See Table 6.8).

Table 6.8 presents citizen journalist according to the area/campus they were covering. 6 out of 8 of these most influential citizen journalists were non-whites (black, Indian and coloured). Vocal White South Africans who authored posts were sympathisers of the movement and kept calling for decorum, peace, while accusing the government for the situation. They expressed their dismay when the protest went violent suggesting that the destruction of property was not going to help the cause.

#### 6.3.4 Strategic orientation of messages

Strategic orientation of messages is a creative and intentional use of syntagmatic and paradigmatic arrangements of signs to reproduce or produce social relationships of power and influence. It is understood here as a *discursive action* (to be differentiated from *discursive activities*) aiming at navigating socio-cultural and technological conditioning when generating social media content. It is important to keep in mind that *strategic orientation of messages* were the product of the reflexivity and creativity of actors enacting everyday resistance from the perspective of their socio-cultural background. Table 6.9 summarises the main agencies involved in #feesmustfall events.

**Table 6.8: Citizen journalist per campus and their most popular posts**

Twitter handle of citizen journalists	University and Campus covered	Most popular Twitter posts
@MarykeVermaak - @TheresaTaylorZA (white)	(VUT)	WATCH #VUT Student uses a petrol bomb - aiming it at police. #Fees2017 <a href="https://t.co/ecFikf2YRi">https://t.co/ecFikf2YRi</a> [55 – 13/10/2016] #VUT #Fees2017 Students just threw a petrol bomb at police [24 - 13/10/2016]
@Emiliamotsai (Non-white)	(TUT) (WITS)	A police man saying to another. "I want to resign. How can they make us fight with children." #FeesMustFall2016 #UP #sabcnews [1943–11/10/2016]
@iamIniHeri – @TruDonafello – @DasenThathiah @Kaveels  (Non-white)	(UKZN)	The situation at #UKZN #Westville is heartbreaking The situation in varsities all over the country is too much :(Can we live! #FeesMustFall [10 – 13/10/2016]  Police damaged the school property while trying to raid innocent students, and they will say it was us #UKZN <a href="https://t.co/58X2X15E4I">https://t.co/58X2X15E4I</a> [19 – 13/10/2016]  #UKZN <a href="https://t.co/PFCTYihRZ9">https://t.co/PFCTYihRZ9</a> [36 - 13/10/2016 – Video of smoking building – over 1000 views]  The #UKZN student services building is on fire @News24 #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/SrHxzPWTEb">https://t.co/SrHxzPWTEb</a> [70 – 13/10/2016 – over 7000 views] (same events as @dasenthathiah)
@Artii_M (Non-white)	(CPUT)	A 26-year-old #CPUT student will be appearing in court today. Charged with arson, malicious damage to property and attempted murder. [31 – 13/0/2016]

**Table 6.9: Agency of #feesmustfall discourse authors**

Agents	Students and sympathisers	ANC, SACP, EFF, NEHAWU, Umkhonto we Sizwe,	Whiteness	Government and University authorities, and DA	Businesses
<b>Ideological orientation of discourse</b>	black-consciousness Fallism	Communism, Nationalism, and anti-colonialism	Setler colonialism, white supremacy, racism and Liberalism	Liberal and social democracy	Colonial capitalism
<b>Legitimacy</b>	Black-child, Freedom fighter and Freedom charter	Freedom Fighter and Freedom charter	Capital and expertise And constitution	African democratic government, freedom charter and constitution	Liberal capitalist and world class
<b>Subjective individual logic</b>	Strategic and subversive	Strategic and subversive	Strategic and subversive	Evasive	Evasive
<b>Mode of reflexivity</b>	Autonomous and Meta-reflexive	Autonomous and Meta-reflexive	Autonomous and Meta-reflexive	Autonomous and Communicative	Autonomous and Communicative

#feesmustfall Twitter™ posts were marked by an oppositional tone breaking from the stereotypical attitude expected from the category of the “*black-child*” registered as destitute, despondent and helpless; to now be adorned with the bravery, relentlessness and fortitude of the *freedom fighter*. The freedom fighter is historically the eponym for those whose struggle brought about a dawn of democracy upon South Africa.

Yet, the *students qua black-child qua freedom fighters* also aligns with a socio-cultural attitude of *avoidance of conflict with authority* which characterises the relation to authority of South Africans of African descent; be it the authority of a parent or of the state. Such an attitude reinforces the *spiral of silence* imposed by the post-apartheid socio-cultural system in one hand while setting agents up to question the relevance of the constraints of their African socio-cultural upbringing in the face of the post-apartheid system, convergence culture and globalisation, and the social media technology, on the other hand. The result is text displaying “*indirectness and ambiguity*” as a praxis of transformative negation as “*silence*” while actively contributing to the movement offline (See section 6.3.3 + Freedom Fight).

There were also agents displaying “*confrontational attitude*” as a praxis of *radical negation* observable through angry rhetoric (See section 6.3.3 +Freedom Fight).

These acts of meaning creation and deployment were realised according to a decalomania of narratives (intertextuality). They were syntagmatically aligned with a set of Twitter™ genres interweaving with paradigmatic sets of registers, as student agency re-identified itself to confront the *legitimacy* of the *power and influence* of the hegemon, and to navigate the *spiral of silence* and *the mediatization* of its *everyday acts of resistance* by social media.

#### **a) #feesmustfall Twitter genres**

The social media content of #feesmustfall was mainly aiming at sharing relevant information, sharing formative opinions in deliberations and debates, as well as sharing supportive emotions and resources. Twitter posts were syntagmatically organised according to specific genres. The research has determined six prevalent Twitter™ genres during #feesmustfall events (See Table 6.10):

- Information sharing and Event reporting
- Opinion, emotions and concerns sharing
- Resource sharing
- Online mobilisation Calls and pledges
- RT and Quote
- Silence (as a reader’s genre)

Table 6.10: Twitter genres during #feesmustfall according to communicative purposes

Communicative purpose	Move structure (depends on the communicative purpose)	Rhetorical strategies	Count
<b>Information sharing / Event Reporting</b>	<p>- <i>Reporting move</i> - [Statement] +/- [Evidence (Reference, keywords, Hashtags, link/URL, image, video, other references)]</p> <p>- <i>Informative opinion move</i> [Statement] + [Evidence (Reference, keywords, Hashtags, link/URL, image, video, meme, other)] + [Hashtag]</p>	<p><b>Prose:</b> Ordinary language</p> <p><b>No comment:</b> pictorial or video content without comment about or over them</p> <p><b>Aphorism:</b> A short pithy or sententious instructive saying</p> <p><b>Metaphor:</b> A figure of speech in which an expression is used to refer to something that it does not literally denote to suggest a similarity</p> <p><b>Metonymy:</b> Substituting the name of an attribute or feature for the name of the thing itself</p> <p><b>Quoting:</b> repeating the words of another</p> <p><b>Satire:</b> Witty language used to convey insults or scorn, esp. saying one thing but implying the opposite</p> <p><b>Innuendo:</b> An indirect (and usually malicious) implication</p>	<b>176</b>
<b>Opinion sharing / Emotion sharing/ Concern sharing</b>	<p>- <i>Simple opinion move</i> [Keyword] + [statement] + [Hashtag]</p>	<p><b>Idiom:</b> A manner of speaking that is natural to native speakers of a language</p> <p><b>Allegory:</b> A visible symbol representing an abstract idea</p> <p><b>Metaphor</b></p> <p><b>Metonymy</b></p> <p><b>Satire</b></p> <p><b>Innuendo</b></p> <p><b>Aphorism</b></p> <p><b>Eulogy</b></p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> request for information</p> <p><b>No comment</b></p>	<b>121</b>
<b>Mobilisation / Call / Pledge of support</b>	<p>- <i>Identification move</i> [Hashtag]</p> <p>- <i>Incentivising move</i> [Paraphrased quote or cultural quote] + [Reference (Hashtag, keyword)]</p> <p>- <i>Mobilisation move</i> [Instructional statement] + [Hashtag]</p>	<p><b>Idiom</b></p> <p><b>Allegory</b></p> <p><b>Metaphor</b></p> <p><b>Metonymy</b></p> <p><b>Aphorism</b></p>	<b>36</b>
<b>Resource sharing</b>	<p>- <i>Resource sharing move</i> [Statement of resource offer + Hashtag]</p>	<p><b>Aphorism</b></p> <p><b>Questioning</b></p>	<b>10</b>
<b>Tweet sharing / RT / Quotes</b>	<p>- <i>RT move</i> - [RT] + ["Quoted text"]</p>	<p><b>Quoting</b></p>	<b>99% of Twitter posts</b>
<b>No post / absence / silence "Invisible audience"</b>	<p>N/A</p> <p>This genre belongs to the reader who is recreating the message in his mind in attempts at reinterpreting it.</p>	<p><b>Silence</b></p> <p>Less than 5/1000 University student posted on Twitter in RSA during #feesmustfall</p>	

These genres and the frequency of their usage suggest that most Twitter posts during #feesmustfall were intended to share information and opinions. This is an indication that the platform was used as a networked communication device carrying information and allowing negotiating its meaning.

#### **b) #feesmustfall Twitter registers**

The research has identified eight main registers used by authors of Twitter posts during #feesmustfall:

1. *Family laundry / parents against children*: This register presents the interaction between students and authorities as a conflict between parents and their children. In this *family laundry* paradigm, the parents have made promises they did not meet; now children do not want to let it go. Despite having an excess of power over the students, authorities must use restraint in order not to harm the children and themselves. This paradigm is used to frame the interaction between the protagonists. It is noticeable with the de-dramatization of events into “rocks and rubber flying”, “cat and mouse game”, “white shield”, “peaceful protest”, “cease fire negotiation”, “meeting with authorities”, etc.; despite perplexing reports of students and police violence: suggesting that the movement is not meant at destroying any party but at pushing for an improvement of conditions.
2. *The struggle continues (a luta continua)*: This is the paradigm of the everlasting fight for the betterment of human conditions and targeting the realisation of ideals. It was the revolutionary cry of the Mozambican FRELIMO during their fight for the independence of their country. It is noticeable in the calls and cries for student to continue the fight until they obtain satisfaction with the use of key words including “the struggle continues”, “soldier on”, “until the fees fall”.
3. *The Black-child qua freedom fighter*: This register describes the collective identity of students and sympathisers as they get involve in the #feesmustfall social movement. The paradigm is derived from the collective identity of anti-apartheid stalwarts; but it is rather opposed to the post-apartheid system. It is noticeable with the description of the “student as poor”, “students’ weapons”, and a parallel with the heroic “generation 76”.
4. *Free Education*: This register represents the promise that was made, and which was conceived as one of the main conditions for freedom as implied by the Freedom Charter. It is noticeable by the use of keywords and hashtags pertaining to “fee increases”.
5. *Fallism*: This register describes the ideology of the *Black-child qua freedom fighter* and is noticeable with the use of hashtags and keywords implying the “fall” of the hegemonic situation. It is also noticeable in the attitude of users characterised by: avoidance of conflict with the authority, confrontational attitude, hope, lifeworld anxiety and preoccupations, and disappointment and distrust.
6. *Court ruling on arrested students*: This register legitimates the rule of law and respect for authority.
7. *Announcements*: This register legitimates the rule of law and respect for authority.
8. *Students celebration*: This register marks both the victory of students but makes it clear that student should not rest on that success since it is only a step forward; and authorities should now know that students will be watching them.

**Table 6.11: Registers of #feesmustfall campaign Twitter™ campaign**

<b>Register</b>	<b>Field</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Tenor</b>
Thematic patterns	<i>Ideational function\meaning</i> Pattern and structure of pattern of meaning (Themes, Hashtags, keywords, symbolic statements and references, emotions, etc.)	<i>Method of communication</i> Textual meaning	<i>Actors, roles and purpose</i> (Affiliation, Identification, legitimation) Interpersonal function\meaning
Institutional response - Court ruling on arrested students	Court ruling Bail ruling Court summons Public hearing Stay behind bars Interdict Criminal charges Legal support	Twitter posts following opinion sharing, Information sharing, information opinion sharing, genres Indicative verbal mode/mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Twitter user posts accounts and opinions,</li> <li>- Magistrate court are institutions of arbitration,</li> <li>- Judges are seen as legitimately handing down condemnations and interdicts,</li> <li>- Students are being charged with crimes and jailed</li> <li>- EFF sponsorship is assisting with motivation and legal advice to arrested students</li> <li>- Advocates and NGOs offering legal support to arrested students</li> </ul>
Announcements	Presidential address EFFpress conferences Higher education institution announcements	Twitter posts following opinion sharing, Information sharing, information opinion sharing, calls and resource sharing genres; Indicative verbal mode/mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oppressive and incompetent /illegitimate authority accentuating the condition of the black-child</li> <li>- Student qua black-child</li> </ul>
Family laundry / parents against children	Student and police clash Cat and mouse game Rocks and Rubber flying Relation to authority Student violence Student weapons Human shield Mattresses a shield Police violence Police weapons Student surrender to police Meeting with authority Cease fire negotiation	Twitter posts following opinion sharing, Information sharing, information opinion sharing, calls and resource sharing genres; Indicative verbal mode/mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students</li> <li>- SAPS/Nyalas – enforce the law and maintain order</li> <li>- Private security personnel assist in protecting university assets</li> <li>- Sponsors and sympathisers pledging support and offering advice and other resources</li> </ul>
The Black-child qua freedom fighter	Poor student Freedom fight Everyday resistance Generation 76	Twitter posts following opinion sharing, information opinion sharing, calls and resource sharing genres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- students at higher education institutions is destitute and hopeless</li> <li>- student involved in the protest for free education</li> </ul>

Table 6.11 continuous...

Register	Field	Mode	Tenor
Free Education	#feesmustfall #Fees2017 #feesmustfall2016 Free Education 0% increase / Against tuition fee hike	Twitter posts following opinion sharing, Information sharing, information opinion sharing, calls and resource sharing genres	- Student qua black-child qua freedom fighter - Higher education and government authorities
Fallism	#feesmustfall Compromise must fall National / Shutdown / public disobedience Rejection of old society	Twitter posts following opinion sharing, informative opinion sharing genres Indicative and imperative verbal mode/mood	- Student involved in the protest - Members of the EFF or student members of the EFF
The struggle continues	Soldier on Amandla! Awethu!	Twitter posts following opinion sharing, information opinion sharing, calls and resource sharing genres; Indicative and imperative verbal mode/mood	- Student involved in the protest - Members of the EFF or student members of the EFF
Students celebration	Eulogy to youth unity and combativeness Eulogy to student leadership Eulogy to women combativeness	Twitter posts following opinion sharing, Information sharing, information opinion sharing, calls and resource sharing genres, Indicative, imperative verbal mode/mood	- Student qua back child qua freedom fighter - Higher education and government authorities

**Authors coding of messages:** Authors on the other hand had in mind to project meaning which will capture the emotions, imagination and the desire of their audience. These were realised by strategically combining genres and registers.

As an example, in the Twitter post below, the author is using the *information sharing and event reporting genre* to stage a *Family laundry / parents against children* situation evocating the emotional conflict and logical contradiction crippling the mind of police officers as they engage the mob of students acting as *the Black-child qua freedom fighter*, against them.

*A police man saying to another. "I want to resign. How can they make us fight with children."  
#FeesMustFall2016 #UP #sabcnews  
[1943 - @Emeliamotsai – journalist SABC- 11/10/2016]*

At societal level, the post suggests that the movement was casting doubts about the legitimacy of authorities' purpose.

**Audience decryption of messages:** Audiences consulting their social media platforms are looking for topics or stories of interest to them, as well as the reinforcement of the social values they hold dear.

Topic or stories of interest suggested by respondents and found in the Twitter™ posts included:

- Mismanagement of resources – money management – corruption

- Social exclusion – Waithood – unemployment – social stigma – social injustice (Low income and little life chances) – RSA racial tension and divide – generational inadequacy
- Relevant lifeworld information regarding friends and relatives, occupation, safety, security, politics and other various activities

Symbolic narratives and places:

Sampled Twitter™ posts repeated symbolic statements, recalled symbolic places, and repeated themes already present in mainstream narratives, ideologies and discourses, carrying shared understanding within the South African environment. Table 6.12 suggests #feesmustfall actors' paradigmatic stances matching social roles, intertextual reference (Documents, symbolic places and narratives) and hashtags.

**Table 6.12: #feesmustfall actors' paradigmatic (symbolic places + narratives) stances on social media**

Occupations and social roles	Documents	Symbolic places	Symbolic narratives	Twitter Hashtag	Twitter handles
<b>Legitimate roles</b> Public protector President of the republic Minister in government Parliament of RSA Member of parliament Chief justice Leader of political party University vice chancellor Parent Worker Student	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa  Acts related to Higher Education in South Africa  Resolutions of ANC congresses	Union Building – Presidency of South Africa  Lithuli house – Head Quarter of the ANC  Parliament	<b><i>Court ruling on arrested students and announcements</i></b>  Cease fire negotiation  Call for peace (Hidden/Obvious)	#feesmustfall	@myanc
<b>Negating / opposing roles</b> Student activist Social activist/social media activist Citizen journalist Freedom fighter	Freedom Charter  Black skin white mask  Communist manifesto  Constitution of the Republic of South Africa	University campuses (VUT, TUT, UKZN, CPUT, WITS, RU/UCKAR, UCT) Johannesburg Cape Town  Magistrate courts  Nelson Mandela bridge	<b><i>Free Education</i></b> <b><i>The struggle continues</i></b> Oppose compromise Soldier on The struggle continues Amandla! <b><i>Family laundry / parents against children</i></b> Rocks and rubber flying Cat and mouse game Condoms against tear gas sting Mattress as a shield Live ammunition Police brutality/violence Student violence <b><i>The Black-child qua freedom fighter</i></b>	#feesmustfall #ukzn #fees2017 #nationalshutdown #wits #feesmustfall2016 #tut #unionbuilding #vut #uckar	@jacanews @witssrc @kaveels @dasenthathiah @oppidanpress @emeliamsotsai @judithsubban

Table 6.12 continues...

Occupations and social roles	Documents	Symbolic places	Symbolic narratives	Twitter Hashtag	Twitter handles
<b>Contingently compatible roles</b> Feminist Media personality and professional journalist (TV, Radio, and press) Writer Photographer Business/Social entrepreneur Social media roles (reader, collaborator, contributor, leader) Lawyer/advocate	Constitution of the EFF  Black skin white mask  Communist manifesto  Constitution of the Republic of South Africa		Money management issue  Students against students  Pledge of support/ sponsoring  Students remain behind bars	#feesmustfall #fees2017 #nationalshutdown #feesmustfall2016 #unionbuilding	@thedailyvox @news24 @ann7tv @ewnreporter

**c) *Asignifying weakness to signify strength: Interweaving genres, registers and social media affordances***

Students and their sponsors' Twitter posts in 2015 and 2016 seem to be mainly challenging the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities, claiming the power and legitimacy of students' action, while encouraging one another (See table 6.12) around the possibility of a better future because of their action. It is done with a sense of empowerment and legitimacy maintained by a sense of family like relationship. Authors identify with the movement #feesmustfall and seem to see themselves as *black-child qua freedom fighter*.

The most used Twitter™ affordance included *Social networking, Communication and Usability*. These affordances suggest that every individual in possession of a device carrying that web application can easily and instantly communicate content (generating content and relaying content) to their social networks or consume content from their social networks on topics of shared interest. The exploitation of these affordances can be directly linked to the dominant use of discursive persuasive *information sharing and event reporting* genre, use of *opinion sharing* genre, and the prevalence of the *silent genre* caused by the *spiral of silence*. The *spiral of silence* is caused by the influence exercised by the combination of *post-apartheid, convergence culture and globalisation*, and the *perceived deceptiveness of social media technology* upon social media readers. As such, social media was used as an instrument of the power of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* over the hegemon.

At the micro level, most influential Twitter post analysed are report and opinionated-reports of events legitimating the black-child and delegitimizing authorities by opposing the bravery and courage of students usually from underprivileged backgrounds to the overwhelming power of authorities brought upon them (See table 6.13)

At the link (intermediary) level, Twitter posts' authors mainly used *information sharing, information opinion sharing and calls and resource sharing* genres in combination with *Black-child qua freedom*

fighter, student celebration, the struggle continues, Family laundry / parents against children registers in rearranging mainstream narratives, ideologies and discourses to suit the social action aims.

At the macro level, Twitter posts identified their authors with the #feesmustfall movement, then carried on with undermining the legitimacy of post-apartheid authorities, while instituting the legitimacy of the black-child and its actions as a freedom fighter.

**Table 6.13: Analysing Twitter posts**

<b>Text</b> (Excerpt of raw data (Twitter posts))	<b>Micro</b> <b>Description</b> (Text analysis)	<b>Link</b> <b>Interpretation</b> (Discursive practice)	<b>Macro</b> <b>Explanation</b> (Social practice)
I'm tearing up. The white human shield. This is both incredibly beautiful and incredibly sad. #FeesMustFall [1800 - @ThabileMpe – social activist – Feminist – 20/10/2015]	Report on social protest action emphasising the logical contradiction of a white human shield in South African society. Eulogy to youth unity and combativeness	Students celebration; Opinion and emotion sharing; Allusion to the rainbow nation narrative	Identification with #FeesMustFall; White power protecting black weakness
More 5 cops on 1 woman!? We've lost our humanity. The struggle is real in South Africa! #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CR1y3KyXIAEvkbN.jpg">https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CR1y3KyXIAEvkbN.jpg</a> [1425 - @UlrichJvV – Humanitarian anthropologist – 21/10/2015]	Report on police violence during protest action emphasising the low moral ground of authorities' actions	The struggle continues; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; information & event reporting, opinion sharing, Family laundry / parents against children	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
They're skinning us alive. #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/7BSbTQ7ZYQ">https://t.co/7BSbTQ7ZYQ</a> (this is a pic) [1323 - @AndreiDamane – student – 21/10/2015]	Report on police violence during protest action emphasising the low moral ground of authorities' actions	information & event reporting, opinion sharing, Family laundry / parents against children	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
[Please RT] Join the revolution tomorrow 🇷🇺🇳🇵🇳🇳🇳 Pretoria/ Durban/ London #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/...">https://t.co/...</a> (call to go to the union building) [1318 - @Kay_Angel – Student activist – 22/10/2015]	Open call to participate in protest action	The struggle continues; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; Family laundry / parents against children; Calls and resource sharing;	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
Remember when they said our generation is lost and lazy? #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/Zt41cqVn6U">https://t.co/Zt41cqVn6U</a> (pic of protesting students) [1243 - @Zack_Khambule – Cape town student – 21/10/2015]	Eulogy to youth unity and combativeness	Students celebration; The struggle continues; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; information & event reporting, opinion sharing,	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Claim of power over the hegemon
This is why we march!!! Education has the POWER to transform South Africa. #FeesMustFall #UnionBuilding <a href="https://t.co/mSdFbtHh...">https://t.co/mSdFbtHh...</a> [1157 - @Lean3JvV – social entrepreneur – 23/10/2015]	Eulogy to youth unity and combativeness	Students celebration; The struggle continues; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; information & event reporting, opinion sharing	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Claim of legitimacy over the hegemon

Table 6.13 continues...

<b>Text</b> (Excerpt of raw data (Twitter posts))	<b>Micro</b> <b>Description</b> (Text analysis)	<b>Link</b> <b>Interpretation</b> (Discursive practice)	<b>Macro</b> <b>Explanation</b> (Social practice)
A police man saying to another. "I want to resign. How can they make us fight with children." #FeesMustFall2016 #UP #sabcnews [1943 - @Emeliamotsai – journalist SABC- 11/10/2016 ] <a href="https://mamaponyamotsai.wordpress.com/">https://mamaponyamotsai.wordpress.com/</a>	Police violence Relation to authority	Family laundry / parents against children; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; information & event reporting, opinion sharing	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
Calling progressive lawyers willing to assist with #FeesMustFall matters in all affected university towns. Volunteers pls contact me urgently [1340 - @AdvDali_Mpofu – EFF - 16/10/2016]	EFF sponsorship is assisting with motivation and legal advice to arrested students; Advocates and NGOs offering legal support to arrested students	The struggle continues; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; Family laundry / parents against children; Calls and resource sharing;	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
A student has been shot. Now protestors are chasing police away. WARNING: Graphic visuals. #UKZN [1109 - @DasenThathiah – tv reporter eNCA– 22/09/2016]	Student and police clash; Police violence Student violence; Cat and mouse game Rocks and Rubber flying	Family laundry / parents against children; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; The struggle continues; information & event reporting, opinion sharing	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
There has been more than 600 arrests of #FeesMustFall activists. Let me tell u: u can arrest all of them, but u'll never arrest their ideas! [935 - @MbuyiseniNdlozi – EFF – +19/10/2016]	Police violence Report on police violence during protest action emphasising the low moral ground of authorities' actions	Family laundry / parents against children; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; information & event reporting, opinion sharing	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
Moving Picture of #FatherGrahamPugin of Holy Trinity Church protecting #Wits students who sought shelter in his church. SAPS later shot him! [881 - @MbuyiseniNdlozi – EFF – 11/10/2016]	Police violence Report on police violence during protest action emphasising the low moral ground of authorities' actions	The struggle continues; Family laundry / parents against children; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; information & event reporting, opinion sharing	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
South Africa DOES NOT have money problems, it has MONEY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS! #FeesMustFall #unionbuilding [821 - @JustZweli – 23/10/2015]	Opinion emphasising the incompetence of authorities	Family laundry / parents against children; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; opinion sharing	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Challenge to the legitimacy of the overwhelming power of authorities
BBC tried to interview students at Rahima Moosa Hospital on graduateing late because of #FeesMustFall. [897 - @Mellz_N – Med school student- 26/10/2016]	Report on interview event suggesting media interference	Family laundry / parents against children; The Black-child qua freedom fighter; information & event reporting, opinion sharing	Identification with #FeesMustFall; Claim of power over the hegemon

#### d) *Ideologies and power relations in #feesmustfall discourses*

There are 3 main ideological lines which dominated the Twitter discursive landscape during the #feesmustfall social movement:

Free and decolonised education was the main narrative encapsulating the ideology of the #feesmustfall movement. It is presented as a broken promise, the cause of South African social ills and the quandary of the socio-cultural condition of the South African student of African descent: which is that of the *black-child* in post-apartheid era (A logical contradiction) (See section 5.4.1).

Fallism as an extreme case of black consciousness holds a strong place in the face of widespread dissatisfaction with the condition of the non-white youth in the country, the slow pace and often failure of social changes initiated, and for the widening mismanagement, corruption and unaccountability displayed by the authorities of the post-apartheid era. It can be seen in the hashtags calling for protest action (#feesmustfall, #nationalshutdown, #unionbuilding, etc.), in the challenges to the legitimacy of post-apartheid authorities portrayed as compromised and incompetent; and in the many claims to power and legitimacy of the movement. Fallism turns the *Black-child* into a *Freedom fighter* in an act of *negation* of the post-apartheid condition, a redress of the contradiction it represents (See section 5.4.2).

The rainbow nation narrative is still felt as the best possible social project for the country and is still able to emotionally move authors and readers as suggest the most retweeted #feesmustfall post of 2015 referring to the “*white human shield*” (See section 5.3.3b and Table 6.12).

### **6.4 Transformative agency and agential impetus during #feesmustfall campaign**

*Agential impetus* is understood in this research as energised collective intentionality. It is meant to reflect South African higher education students’ readiness for collective action as they take on the oppositional social identity carrying the movement.

Students and sponsors bestowed *self-consciousness* of their individual and social situation (identity and legitimacy), *reflexivity* in engaging with the challenges at hand through *internal conversations*, *creativity* in devising a discourse that exploits and navigate structural opportunities and impediments (Asignification/signification), and *intentionality* in the impetus shown in their preparedness to act (socio-cultural and technological trajectory of empowerment).

Student *agential impetus* was derived from the momentum built in their social role of studentship allowing for a special collective *identification and legitimation* as they purposefully used contingent socio-cultural and technological opportunities in processes of *asignification/signification* to *creatively* generate *discursive actions*; despite *concerns and emotional commentaries* caused by the influence of the *spiral of silence*<sup>3</sup>. Students agential impetus was the condition for their involvement in the

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<sup>3</sup> The *spiral of silence* here is generated by the post-apartheid, and the convergence culture and globalisation systems through the social media technology utilised (see also section 6.5.3).

#feesmustfall social movement. Figure 6.6 suggest a depiction of the workings of student agential impetus.

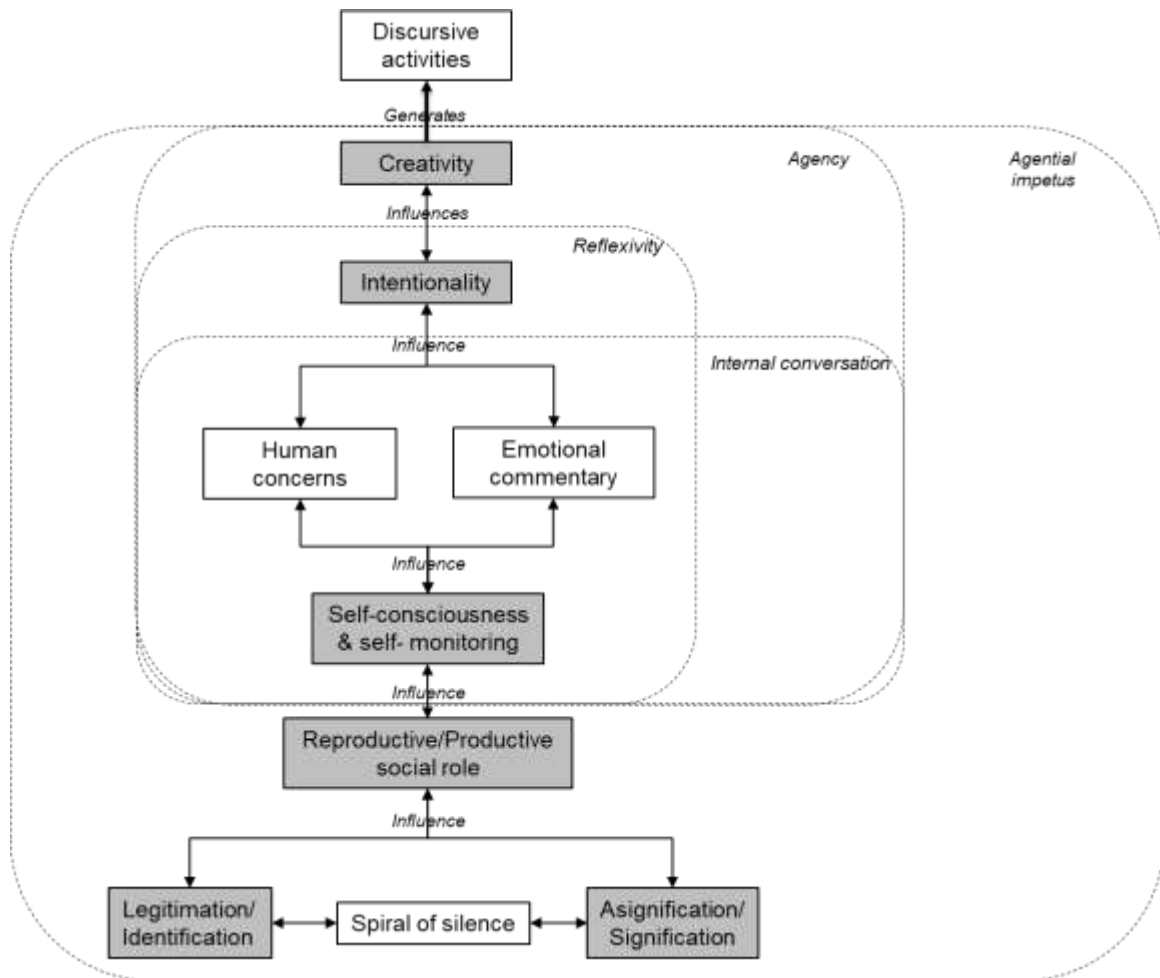


Figure 6.6: A depiction of students qua black child qua freedom fighters' agential impetus

On the other hand, post-apartheid authorities, including university leadership, as corporate agents were conscious of deriving their legitimacy from the struggle against apartheid. They acknowledged their part in the production of the *status quo* by staying mute on social media and negotiating outcomes with #feesmustfall leadership (See section 6.4.2).

#### 6.4.1 The impetus of primary agency

The impetus of primary agency of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* relied upon their identification and legitimation of their demands deployed through their agency (self-consciousness, creativity, and reflexivity) and the mediatization of the social media technology to generate momentum.

### a) **Self-consciousness:**

Higher education students<sup>4</sup> from all over South Africa, can be classified as primary agency, bestowing strong African cultural values, a sense of civil disobedience, a drive for social change and an empathy for one another (See section 4.5.2b).

South Africa possess 10 official languages including 8 African languages (IsiZulu, isiXosa, Southern and Northern Sotho, SeTswana, Venda, Tsonga, Swati) and 2 languages of European origin (English and Afrikaans) (see section 6.1.4 a). These languages offer to all citizens an opportunity to express themselves and to be understood; but also, they reflect the diversity in socio-cultural background to account for when generating content on social media. In the end #feesmustfall social media authors mainly elected to use the English language to reach a broader audience (See section 6.3.2a).

Authors of Twitter posts were:

- agents of South African higher education,
- agents of the post-apartheid social system,
- agents of their respective socio-cultural communities (at from communities speaking official languages),
- agents of an information technology led globalisation as social media users.

Ideologically, amongst interviewees, non-whites (9 participants) displayed socio-cultural, *black consciousness* and economical *socialism*; while the 2 whites and 1 female non-white displayed affinities with *liberalism* and *capitalism* (See section 4.5.2b and Table 4.3).

Collectively, during #feesmustfall, students self-identified as the *black-child qua freedom fighter* seeking redress:

- on the ground of promises of the “*freedom charter*” to provide the youth with free education with the fall of the colonial state; on the ground of a national right and culture of protest;
- on the ground of legitimate democratic institutions;
- on the ground of the legitimacy of their shared struggle for a better life in the new dispensation;
- and on the ground of the opportunity of the enablement generated by socio-cultural and technological diversity.

### b) **Creativity**

In their discursive acts of everyday resistance, students were *autonomous reflexives*: mostly auto-coordinating in contributing to the movement, they made efforts to comply with semiotico-linguistic, Socio-cultural and social media constrains, and committed themselves to the achievement of free and decolonised education (See section 6.3.2, 6.3.3 and 6.3.4). The complexity of their process of self-identification which required, for students of non-European ethnicity:

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<sup>4</sup> Non-white students from Johannesburg, Cape Town, Kwazulu Natal, and Free State were the most vocal online

- to draw from the energy of their youth;
- to draw from the momentum of their large number;
- to draw from their shared struggle;
- and to borrow from European socio-cultural liberal stock to construct an ability to override African socio-cultural tendencies regarding relating to authority.

That process allowed them to step into social change roles conspiring to undermine the workings of the hegemon. The process was possible at an individual level because personal identities exposed to contingent external socio-cultural and technological influences tend to mitigate the effect of social identities bound to reproduce the social system, allowing for the possibility to override that local system.

### **c) Reflexivity and internal conversation**

Students had to constantly weight their actions against their individual bargaining power, their degree of interpretive freedom regarding their condition, and their Socio-cultural directional guidance for strategic action.

*FMF1: I am not... I am not like... this is creasy... I am not like fully invested into the #feesmustfall because this is my final year; so I value my graduating more than what they protest... it's creasy as that but not at the protest.*

*FMF3: I was told that even if applying for jobs, you have to be careful what you post. And I don't recall posting things about: "this how I feel about the movement." Because now your prospective employers are seeing that. Would they hire me if they see that I am a radical who believes in this particular kind of thing?*

They had to overcome the emotional conflict of undermining the African value of *respect due to authority* as elders through *internal conversations* and *creativity*, allowing them to redefine their status from destitute *black-child* to empowered *black-child qua freedom fighter* and act accordingly.

*FMF3: (Laughter) it's a reality bite... they accepted the lesser role. They didn't challenge authority and they got what they got. And you don't want a repeat of that cycle... so, maybe this is the best way to challenge it; but like a part of me will always feel... you know, torn.*

The main rationale to #feesmustfall was the precariousness of students who felt financially strangled, socially excluded and disappointed by the hegemon. They have had to regularly endure a state of *waithood* while watching their meagre opportunities for breakthrough compromised by government officials' corruption, mismanagement of resources and leniency towards the abuses of *capital*. The *opportunity cost* of education was becoming unbearable, threatening the achievement of their aspirations.

They were acutely aware of their *involuntary and precarious placement* in life described as a category of *previously underprivileged citizens* or *missing middle*, with a pejorative undertone suggesting a lack of ambition, laziness and an addiction to handouts.

*FMF4: For me it struck me because... I was like people they can really go that far to really express how they feel about fees and also about how, the way that the institutions are treating them. The vulnerability of the person who was posting this thing, I felt somehow the shame the desperation to really... you can really go this far for you to be heard; and exposing your... What is that word that people use... like showing everything out there, everything out there.*

Their sharing of the collective identity of the *student qua black-child* (carrier of the plight of the black-child) gave legitimacy to their claim and to their action. That identity brought them together in their large number, showed them their power in number and led them in protest to demand change, to obtain a better deal, from government. They acted as a primary agency and led interactions with corporate agency of authorities.

#### **d) *Mediatised social media technology***

Social media platforms Facebook™, WhatsApp™ and Twitter™ were paramount in the mobilisation, cohesion and sustaining of the protesting lines. Their *mediatised affordances* (See section 6.6.2):

- enforced a common language;
- they facilitated networking and fast spreading of messages;
- they eased the constructing, capturing, editing, communicating, and exploring of information on multiple channels;
- they oriented socio-culturally asignifying (regarding African values) and embedded *convergence culture and globalisation* values of collective intelligence, participation and transparency;
- and they rewarded compliance with fame and influence.

#### **6.4.2 The impetus of corporate agency**

Corporate agency during #feesmustfall, was constituted by the movement, student organisations and their leadership on the one hand, and political, cultural, social and economic institutions and their leadership on the other.

#### **a) *Corporate agency of the studentship***

Students have rallied on similarity of social conditions, emotions, aspiration, the narrative of government failure and illegitimate practices, a tacit accord on non-violence, a clear intention on shutting universities down and a resolution to carry on until a legitimate response is given to their demands. #feesmustfall networked campaigners acted as corporate agents on behalf of individual students.

*Leadership has arrived #NationalShutDown #OccupyUnionBuildings #FeesMustFall  
<https://t.co/01fKo2ZcFI>  
[162 - @mooshtaffa – TV personality – 23/10/2015]*

*Let us appreciate some leaders who made #FeesMustFall movement possible. Dedicated to non-violence #unionbuilding <https://...> (with a pic of Wits students march)  
[627 - @ReadaBookSA – NGO in education activism]*

The student leadership was represented by: student organisation representatives from Student Representative Councils (SRCs) at every university; political parties' student organisations including South African Students Congress (ANC-SASCO), EFF Student Command (EFFSC), DA Student Organisation (DASO), Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania (PASMA), for the most influential; and the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA).

*Our presidents ♡ we are led! #NationalShutdown #FeesMustFall <https://t.co/59V5CyZ98G>  
(pic of female Wits presidents)  
[354 - @WitsSRC – Student organisation – 21/10/2015]*

*Mcebo Freedom Dlamini they will ridicule you now, but history will remember you well.  
#FeesMustFall <https://t.co/KLT0ziKeKe>  
[320 - @shaeera\_k - student activist at Wits – 18/10/2016]*

A special case of a situation of distrust of authority figures was Wits SRC leadership led by Miss Nompandolo Mkhathshwa. She was once the extraordinary gift of gender unbiased youth in leadership, leading Wits students into protest, flanked by Mcebo Dlamini, Shaeera Kalla and Vuyani Pambo (as President, former presidents and EFF SO chairman). She was soon challenged by students after an agreement with authorities on classes to resume and calling for an end to the national shutdown<sup>5</sup>.

#### **b) Corporate agency of authorities**

The groups related to the ANC and the EFF were the most vocal online and most active offline. In the end, against a tacit agreement between political parties not to intervene in the movement, EFF leaders pledged their support to the movement and supplied arrested students with legal support.

*Police are now preparing to kill peaceful students, @MYANC murders regime will fall. #KUBO #FeesMustFall2016 #Asijiki  
[281 - @Julius\_S\_Malema – Leader of EFF political party – 10/10/2016]*

*Moving Picture of #FatherGrahamPugin of Holy Trinity Church protecting #Wits students who sought shelter in his church. SAPS later shot him!*

*[881 - @MbuyiseniNdlozi – EFF – 11/10/2016]*

#### **c) #feesmustfall alliance**

Students received widespread support and sponsorship from institutional leaders (MPs, Judges, Public protector) media personalities; political leaders of the ANC and from many parties in the opposition; from unions, especially university workers union; from NGOs in education; from academics; from activist; from sports personalities; from musicians; from lawyers; from entrepreneurs; from the Umkhonto we Sizwe; and various other influential societal actors. Students received various donations, from food to legal advice, via transport fares and various pledges to donate moneys for the upcoming academic year.

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<sup>5</sup> See (Whittles, 2016) <https://mg.co.za/article/2016-10-20-00-the-rise-and-fall-of-nompandolo-mkhatshwa-the-wits-src-president>

Calling progressive lawyers willing to assist with #FeesMustFall matters in all affected university towns. Volunteers, pls contact me urgently  
[1340 - @AdvDali\_Mpofu – EFF - 16/10/2016]

Malema says EFF stands behind #FeesMustFall and says all students must never surrender and not retreat.  
[23 - @GugsM - 10-13-2016 12:22:33]

People all over the world standing in solidarity with South Africa's #FeesMustFall student movement #UnionBuilding <https://...>  
[407 - @ReadaBookSA – 23/10/2015]

Yet, students had to receive a response from government, the ANC led government, which was holding the power to apply structural change.

### 6.4.3 Agential impetus in post-apartheid South Africa

The *agential impetus* of higher education students and authorities shaped the relationship of power metaphorically as a sort of “*family laundry*” affair between parents and their children; where parents are being blamed and called out by their children to make amends for not fulfilling their socio-cultural and historical duty to care for them.

#### a) **Meaning, identity and alliances on the student/child side of the hegemonic divide (primary agency)**

Individually, students saw themselves as *destitute black-child*; but in group they have overcome their situation to step into a shared identity of an “*empowered black-child*”: a “*freedom fighter*” able to transform the arrangement of society to improve the conditions of their lifeworld.

The discourse they availed on Twitter™ suggested that (See section 6.3.4 for discursive practices):

- they identified with the movement using of the hashtag #feesmustfall;
- they contributed to it in many ways including by posting messages, re-tweeting messages, reading messages, engaging in on- and off-line debates,
- and by responding to calls and instructions with resources and compliance.

Student of African descent had to navigate socio-cultural emotional conflicts arising from authorities' practices they deemed oppressive and responsible for their condition. These *emotional commentaries* and *human concerns* weighted in ponderous *internal conversations*, determined their levels of *intentionality of involvement* and influenced their embrace of *creative* use of genres and registers to stay safe while actively negating the legitimacy of authorities' actions (See figure 6.6).

They were individually *primary agents* of their social conditions and members of the *corporate agency of change* of the movement.

#### b) **Meaning, identity and alliances of the teacher/parent side of the hegemonic divide (corporate agency)**

Corporate agency as influence during the #feesmustfall campaign was exercised by many opinion leaders usually with an important following. The most vocals included EFF leader Adv Dali Mpofu, EFF leader Dr Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, EFF leader Julius Malema, the Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng,

Wits SRC leader Shaeera Kala, and Former Public Protector Adv Thuli Madonsela. They were supporters and sponsors of the #feesmustfall movement.

The president of the republic and the minister of Higher Education at the time, Mr Jacob Zuma and Dr Blade Nzimande, as well as vice chancellors of Universities, with the extension of police and private security personnel represented the hegemonic forces responsible of the situation of the black-child. They used official channels including press briefings, addresses and various broadcasting media programs to express a desire to solve the issues peacefully and to propose various type of solutions to the situation. They did not make Twitter™ posts identifying with #feesmustfall.

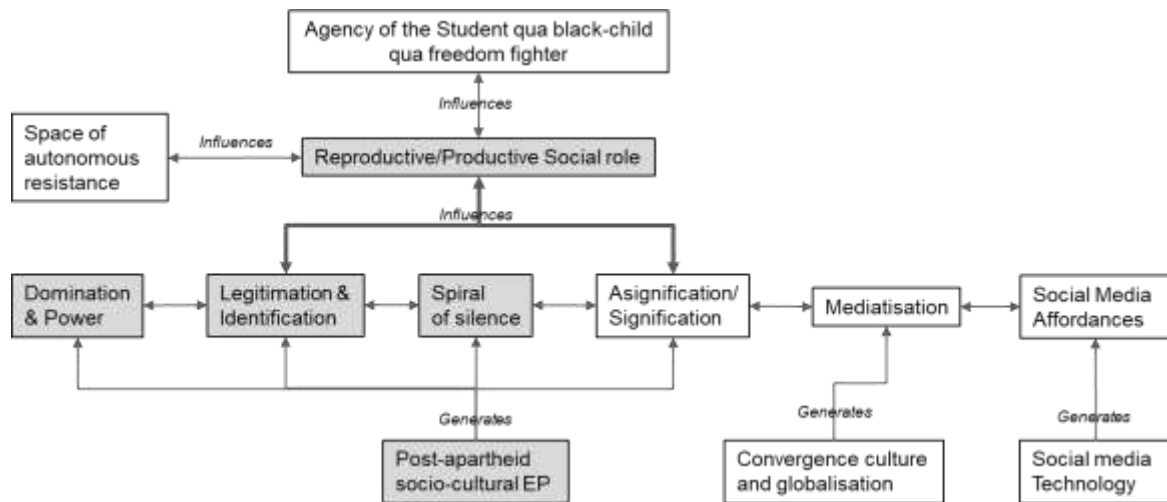
The president and the minister were in a tight corner since they were part of the ANC governing alliance for which *free education* was a revolutionary promise of the Freedom Charter. The governing alliance from revolutionary stock was riddle with factionalism, corruption, fast widening social inequalities, and was losing ground with the public which was staging violent service delivery protest throughout the country for the slow pace of implementation of promises.

They were *autonomous reflexive*, surprised by the scale of events, losing the upper hand and ineluctably bound to concede the request of angry students; at least for the time being.

## **6.5 Identification and legitimation during #feesmustfall events**

During #feesmustfall events, the discourse of resistance over Twitter™ rose from a mix of conditioning context of the post-apartheid social system, convergent culture and globalisation systems, and the social media technology. This section focuses on the contribution of the post-apartheid social system to *students qua black-child qua freedom fighter* empowered discourse of resistance through the identification of its authors and the legitimation of their social role and actions.

As an emergent property of relationship of a systemic magnitude, the post-apartheid social system is responsible for the distribution of resources, life chances and opportunities in South Africa. Its tendencies relevant to the research include domination and power, social identification, spiral of silence, legitimation, asignification and signification and roles definition. *Identification and legitimacy* underpinned *student qua black-child qua freedom fighters' agential impetus* (See Figure 6.7).



**Figure 6.7: Strategic impingement of post-apartheid socio-cultural system on South African students during #feesmustfall**

The following subsections present findings about actor's identification, the social legitimation of the movement, the power relationship between students and post-apartheid authorities as the support authors *agential impetus*.

### 6.5.1 Actor's identification and enrolment: alone and together

The realist social theory suggests that an individual would have a *personal identity* which was constructed from interactions with their immediate environment; then the individual acquires a *social identity* by inheriting the condition (life chance and opportunities) of its social environment; and finally, the individual might step into a *social role* and become a *social actor* with the ability to impact the social environment.

#### a) Actor's identification during #feesmustfall

South African community members who posted on Twitter™ where carrying a *personal identity* dressed in their *social identities* expressed in their self-declared Twitter™ handles or cyberidentity over Twitter™. These socio-cultural identifications during #feesmustfall were mainly influenced by <sup>6</sup>:

- Race/ethnicity comprehending Black south Africans, white South Africans, and Coloured South Africans; further differentiated in many nations of African ethnicity e.g.: Khoi San, Ndebele, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu, etc.), various European ethnicity (Afrikaners, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Eastern European, etc.), various mixed race (from Malay, Chinese, Javanese, Malagasy and khoi) and Indian/Asian ethnicities. Statistics South Africa suggest that over 90% of the country's population is non-white while 80% of the total population of African in ethnicity. 43% is in the age range 15-40; of which less than 10% is attending higher education (About 4.3% of total population).

<sup>6</sup> The data was retrieved from Statistics South Africa's *Mid-Year population estimates 2018, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q2 2018, General Household Survey 2017 and Gender series volume I: Economic empowerment, 2001–2014*

- Welfare which divided the society between *previously underprivileged* during apartheid and the *previously privileged* who are alleged to have kept many of their privileges and wealth. Yet, there was another class not poor enough to be assisted and not wealthy enough to make it without help: the *missing middle*.
- Gender which historically advantaged male, is now used to promote and empower females with the availability of opportunities. Statistics South Africa suggests that 51% of the country's population is female; yet they are still paid less than males in similar roles and much less than white male if they are black females.

As a consequence, South African identification during #feesmustfall is determined by race/ethnicity, welfare regime and gender. That identification carries the impingement of post-apartheid structural conditioning (distribution of bargaining power, interpretive freedom, resources and opportunities). *rich white males* are the most powerful individual bread-winners; while *poor black females* are the most powerless bread-winners. Students are not bread-winners by definition and would easily be attached to the female from whom they are expected to receive care: they are simply put, *children*. In addition, they are mostly from African descent, making most of them *black-children*, cared for by *poor black women*, with very limited prospects in life thereof. That forms a prototype depicting the social conditions of most students at South African universities: the *black-child*.

*The black-child* is consequently a master signifier of the condition of the non-white South African student. It is used to legitimate the claim for free education while contributing to reject and delegitimize the post-apartheid dispensation as failed and oppressive.

As they rose in protest the hegemony of their condition, students turned into "*freedom fighters*". Student *qua black-child qua freedom fighter* in their posts, bestowed online attitudes including:

- *lifeworld preoccupation/anxiety*: because they lack the resources to afford opportunities and the rules have very little sympathy for their challenges
- *Social disappointment and distrust*: disappointment about society, a sentiment of powerlessness, distrust of authority/leadership, distrust of government, and some distrust of outsider's involvement and distrust of technology mediation;
- *Avoidance/confrontational attitude towards authority* as it is upheld by African socio-cultural systems
- while also showing a certain degree of *trust for democratic institutions, hope and compassion*

These attitudes betray, anguish and conflict because they can sense a wrong in their actions which set a precedent and break them away from an ideal of a *caring elder* and a *devoted African child*.

#### **b) Reproductive and productive social roles of #feesmustfall**

During #feesmustfall events, South African students, their supporters and authorities were occupying various social roles. These roles could be categorised as (See Table 6.14):

- *Legitimate*: because generated by legitimated social institutions and structures to serve their reproduction;

- *Contingently compatible*: Legitimate role with a propensity to appreciate novel ideas;
- and *Negating/Opposing*: Roles that are resenting and actively opposing social norms.

These roles have influence and are in a continuum between being in line with the socio-cultural system (their bearers are protected from systemic repression) and opposing the system (Their bearers are repressed by the system).

#feesmustfall on social media executed an antagonistic identification where it was all about “students” qua *black-child* against “the hegemonic system” represented by higher education and post-apartheid societal institutions and leadership. Support for the movement mainly came from *Contingently compatible* and *negating/opposing* social roles; but also, from *legitimate social roles* (See Table 6.14 for some roles involved in #feesmustfall events).

**Table 6.14: A categorisation of social roles during #feesmustfall**

Legitimate roles	Contingently compatible roles	Negating/opposing roles
Public protector	Feminist	Student activist
President of the Republic	Media personality and professional journalist (TV, Radio, and press)	Social activist/social media activist
Minister in government	Writer	Citizen journalist
Parliament of RSA	Photographer	Freedom fighter
Member of parliament	Business/Social entrepreneur	Leader of opposition political party
Chief justice	Social media roles (reader, collaborator, contributor, leader)	
Leader of political party - ANC	Lawyer/advocate	
University vice chancellor	Professional	
Parent		
Worker		
Student		

The legitimacy of the movement owed a lot to the involvement of actors carrying *legitimate and contingently compatible* roles. Many of them could recall the struggle against apartheid, struggles against early post-apartheid systemic impediments and the driving promises which included Free Education. Hence the public protector, the Chief Justice, some members of parliament, some parents, unions representatives, veteran Umkhonto we Sizwe members and actors in contingently compatible role were reported pledging support for the movement on various media (Radio, TV and social media) as suggested many Twitter posts.

*"I invite you to concern yourself with #FeesMustFall. As long as there is injustice there will be no peace" Madonsela #bmfawards2016*  
 [314 - @Azania\_ - Radio presenter – 7/10/2016]

*Maybe is about time that businesses must start addressing #FeesMustFall than leave it to government - Chief Justice Mogoeng #SACCI2016*  
 [9 - @Ndzavi - D10-19-2016 20:48:56]

*Stellenbosch earlier today. Nice neh? #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall*  
<https://t.co/F5AY1BSSNW> (Pic of gathered protesting students)  
 [436 - @ShakaSisulu – media personality – 21/10/2015]

They cemented #feesmustfall legitimacy under local social circumstances, conform to historical practice of rising against the social wrong, and aligned with the value of education for the achievement of meaningful freedom as suggested in the Freedom charter.

Even activists from around the world pledged support for the movement:

*Black men from Cal got you South Africa. Let the bells of freedom ring! #FeesMustFall  
#NationalShutDown <https://t.co/qF...>  
[430 - @BlakeDontCrack – American social activist – 22/10/2015]*

*People all over the world standing in solidarity with South Africa's #FeesMustFall student  
movement #UnionBuilding <https://...>  
[407 - @ReadaBookSA – 23/10/2015]*

The realist social theory suggests two important things: Agents become actors by stepping into and animating a social role; social roles are prior definition of obligations, sanctions and interests, in relation to resources and rules. This implies that social roles are generated by socio-cultural emergent properties.

The obligation of the *student* role is to study to achieve higher qualification providing society with much needed talents at high level positions, opening the opportunity to be rewarded with a higher salary, an enhanced social status and the ripple effect of motivating others to have confidence and to seek excellence. However, having access to university has proven more arduous due to unusual academic requirements and increasing cost. In effect, once 'accepted' into the institution, these young adults must overcome racism, sexism, accommodation issues, transport issues and other socio-cultural hardships on campus; and once graduated, jobs are scarce with adverts requiring above qualifications, to dispose of years of experience, a vehicle or to be residing in particular areas. In the end, the lack of resources is unsurmountable and the rules for access tend to favour previously privileged members of society and their kin, reducing the chances of the previously underprivileged making it. As a consequence, the *student qua black-child* must summon the *freedom fighter* from the historical struggle against apartheid for the struggle of the day, the *struggle for free and decolonised education*.

+++++++ Twitter posts

*Remember when they said our generation is lost and lazy? #FeesMustFall  
#NationalShutDown <https://t.co/Zt41cqVn6U> (pic of protesting students)  
[1243 - @Zack\_Khambule – Cape town student – 21/10/2015]*

*This is why we march!!! Education has the POWER to transform South Africa. #FeesMustFall  
#UnionBuilding <https://t.co/mSdFbtHh...>  
[1157 - @Lean3JvV – social entrepreneur – 23/10/2015]*

*"Our struggle is not to fight each other. Let us find each other, AGAIN. Let us find a way."  
#EndOutsourcing #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown  
[10 - @ZukiswaWhite - 2015-10-27]*

+++++++ Respondents

*FMF3: I don't think that the society that we are in was going to warrant a situation where certain unbalances are going to occur for a sustained period of time. And I think that people, students and especially black students are frustrated to the point where... especially that last year situation where you are told that fees were about to increase to an astronomical amount.*

*FMF7: I think the reason for #feesmustfall was that people were tired. People were tired of being pushed around, people were tired of... the education or the university would just make decisions, financial decisions without consultations.*

*FMF11: There is this huge socio-economic imbalance that needs to be addressed.*

The summoning is an *identification and interdiscursive* process through which social media authors recall symbols, statements, registers from the Freedom charter, the constitution of South Africa, the constitution of the ANC and that of the EFF.

*Umkhonto weSizwe is alive! #TUT students have resuscitated it. #FeesMustFall  
<https://t.co/Riap7lhFuk>  
[57 - @Milisauthando - 10-13-2016 15:55:14]*

### **6.5.2 Social legitimization of #feesmustfall discourse over social media**

Legitimacy stems from predictability of actions, conformity to historical practice or systemic requirements, and alignment with the social values of the local community. The analysis of the intertextuality of #feesmustfall discourse on Twitter™ provided insight about it.

Most Twitter™ contributors during #feesmustfall identified with the grievances and the aim of the movement which they seem to have judged as legitimate and their resolution long overdue. That legitimacy also stemmed from the illegitimacy of the position of authorities perceived to have strayed away from historical practice and African social values. The grievances, also expressed in many Twitter posts, were geared around the non-realisation and slowness in the implementation of the promises of the struggle against the apartheid system.

+++++++ Twitter posts

*More 5 cops on 1 woman!? We've lost our humanity. The struggle is real in South Africa!  
#NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CR1y3KyXIAEvkbN.jpg>  
[1425 - @UlrichJvV – Humanitarian anthropologist – 21/10/2015]*

*Remember when they said our generation is lost and lazy? #FeesMustFall  
#NationalShutDown <https://t.co/Zt41cqVn6U> (pic of protesting students)  
[1243 - @Zack\_Khambule – Cape town student – 21/10/2015]*

+++++++ Respondents

*FMF6: #feesmustfall... that's just a national thing. But from institution to institution prior to 2015 there have been a lot of strikes related to financial issues – NSFAS didn't pay, like the institutions wanted upfront payments and for you to have cleared last year debt. You will find that for a lot of things that is how they barricade a lot of people financially. Now, too many black people were entering the institutions, these problems started rapidly coming up, so they united and said let just scrap this thing, let no pay for this anymore*

*FMF7: No, it's not. Until... the wealth of this country is still in the hands of the people who put us in apartheid, I don't think... and also until our minds are free, until I am not seen as a black female, disadvantaged, I don't think we gona get out of apartheid. I think the day when I am just a female engineer or I'm just an engineer, then we can say we are post-apartheid.*

*FMF13: On social media, there were a lot of people who were trying to teach other people and trying to pass some knowledge across to ignorant people: that blacks were denied certain things. So, there was a lot of arguments a lot of people highlighting 'black pain', giving their own personal stories and the significance of #feesmustfall.*

The intertextual analysis of Twitter posts suggests that:

- Most posts identified with values of *education, togetherness* and the *African respect due to elders*. The values of education and togetherness are also black consciousness and socialist values expressed both in the Freedom charter, the bill of Rights in the constitution of RSA and the constitutions of the ANC and the EFF which are both political parties with black consciousness and socialist ideologies. The respect due to elders is a value of African societies as confirm the interviewees who all acknowledge the sacro-saint character of elders wielding enormous influence over younger community members.
- Yet, there was also an agreement with regards to heartfelt frustration, disappointment and distrust of *authorities qua elders/parents* due to their alleged corruption and mal-governance which resulted in the resurgence of neoliberal capitalism favourable to neo-colonial tendencies, visible in the control of capital remaining in the hands of the white minority while the blacks had to live with it, maintained in their position by limited access to opportunities and education. That course of events is perceived to betray commonly held ideals and led the crowd to only see “compromises” in the deals made and “sell-outs” in the negotiators.
- Further, authors were using *Fallist discourse* made up of black consciousness, anticolonialism and *Sankarist* narratives, utilising symbolic places recalling anti-apartheid struggle heroes and seats of political and social power (e.g.: Luthuli House, Parliament, Union Building or Mandela bridge); symbolic events recalling the bravery and sacrifice of the people against the hegemony of apartheid (1976 student uprising, Umkhonto we Sizwe armed struggle, Sharpeville massacre, Marikana massacre, #Rhodesmustfall, etc.); a rejection or critique or disappointment with many anti-apartheid struggle heroes for “*accepting the lesser role*”, their self-enrichment or selling-out when making the deal for the advent of democracy in South Africa (Nelson Mandela, Jacob Zuma); and symbolic struggle songs used by the ANC, the EFF, the SACP, Unions and communities involved in service delivery protests (the *decolonized national anthem*<sup>7</sup>, and other struggle songs).

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<sup>7</sup> **#FeesMustFall anthem is a historic modern spiritual**

<https://mg.co.za/article/2016-10-21-00-fmf-anthem-is-a-historic-modern-spiritual>

- #feesmustfall was the rallying expression and non-negotiable demand of the movement which reprises the freedom charters goal of Free Education as a condition for freedom. The Freedom charter is still the inspiration for the social programs proposed by the ANC and its allies.
- #Nationalshutdown is the means by which pressure was exercised over authorities, a usual disruptive measure of public disobedience observed during social movements. Authors of Twitter posts estimated that it was a necessary measure since the running system was perpetuating the ills of the past and to be stopped to allow for a review and a transformation of responsible mechanisms in such a way that they would permit for *Free and Decolonised Education* to be delivered to students qua *black-child*.
- #Unionbuilding meant that the highest authority in the land had to listen to the demands of most students as both a test to the democratic vitality of the country's institutions, a belief in their legitimacy, and an opportunity to realign with the trajectory of the history of the *black-child* whose future is in its hands.

### 6.5.3 Spiral of silence in #feesmustfall

#feesmustfall Twitter™ users suggested that they were cautious about what they were allowing themselves to share on social media. They seemed to be concerned about the negative implications of their utterances out of fear and worry to be in disrepute, singled out or ostracised.

*FMF1: I don't do that... I don't post pictures of other stuff. I don't want to be in trouble for a stuff that is not directed to me.*

*FMF3: So, like when it comes to posting I feel like "Flip". In my mind I have this like feeling to say something; but I hold it back for the mere fact that my image right there needs to be protected. And I can't flip flop, because now, if you gonna post something in the opposite way, now you are this guy.*

*FMF4: You can't just post anything in those group chats. You know...*

*FMF5: So, it definitely gave me a voice, one I chose not to take. Obviously, I can say that in small groups like WhatsApp, I actually voice my opinion, I definitely say what I think, what I know... you know.*

Many people are forced into silence because they suspect that the social media platforms they are using (Facebook™ and Twitter™) do not guarantee an acceptable level of privacy (potential deceptiveness of social media). They suggested that the platform "WhatsApp™" offered better privacy and protection for the expression of their deeper thoughts. They fear intolerance for a discourse which might diverge from the mainstream narratives and discourses (Rainbow nation and liberal democratic discourse).

Some South African community members were also silent, persuaded that their opinions might not align with the "*#feesmustfall opinion*" and cause an undesired backlash as suggested respondents with liberal views:

FMF8: On the sense that for a white person to comment, it was very dangerous at the time... So, I thought rather... 'cause nothing I really say could justify like... nothing I really say is going to help... nothing I really say is going to... even if I agree or disagreed, I am white, my opinion doesn't count. That's kind of my feeling.

FMF11: I actually didn't post anything on social media during #feesmustfall. Why? Because it was such like, such a volatile environment. Anything that you would say could be misinterpreted, yeah... The thing is my problem at first with the movement was that it seems that everyone was expected to say one thing. If you don't agree with the masses, and that's the problem with social media, then, people come down on you like a ton of bricks.

FMF12: I just... I have this thing where I can see negatives in both arguments and that what I focus on. So, I tend not to get involved, because I don't really have anything positive to say from either point of views. I understand everyone to be irritating.

These are effects of the structural impingements of the post-apartheid era strategically forcing people into silence or creative writing: spiral of silence.

The *spiral of silence* is thus considered as a signification imposition in the discourse performed online or muted, to be *indirect and ambiguous* in their attitude. It is a tendency of the post-apartheid social system of South Africa; which seem to be transparent to the *mediatization* effect of *convergence culture and globalisation* underpinned *social media technology*.

The *spiral of silence* is a generative mechanism able to explain why over 75% of Twitter post during #feesmustfall (see section 6.1.2 a) were retweets (indirectness and ambiguity) or that there are many more Twitter users who only read the messages and engaged in offline campaign actions or engaged in *slacktivism*.

#### **6.5.4 Social influence, power and domination in post-apartheid South Africa**

Post-apartheid socio-cultural structures have bestowed social actors with various life chances, opportunities and bargaining powers. Anti-apartheid struggle heroes who were mainly from the ANC inherited the greater part of political and social influence, while the economic power remained in the hands of the white minority. The ANC alliance made the deals for the countries democratisation and enjoys a majority control over government and parliament. It dominates the political life of the country with an unparalleled social influence. Yet, its economic influence is limited with an overwhelming control of financial, manufacturing and productive industries in the hands of the white minority. That situation seems not to have changed much after over 24 years into a democratic South Africa; but rather, struggle heroes seem to have got in bed with capital and have forgotten the unresolved plight of the people, and in this case of students qua *black-child*, barred from education due to higher cost of learning, barred from employment due to lack of appropriate qualification, work experience or unspoken racial bias of employers, and barred from a dignifying life due to an endemic waithood.

The resentment could be felt amongst students qua *black-child* faced with ever increasing university fees. It was common to have a fee protest in universities in the beginning of the year usually curtailed with debt and various pressures; and often complaints were raised about racially biased decisions concerning the handling of students and staff at previously white dominated institutions of higher learning and were not ensuing in noticeable transformation.

*FMF1: Because I can't get through to them. I can't get reach... If I was gonna reach them I was gonna talk to them. For instance, remember when I was talking about the CEO. The fact that I don't have a title, they are not gonna listen to me. So that's why I like all these people in the protest to touch on that again. They form like a unit and try and pressure the management to actually talk to them.*

*FMF13: People need to know what black people go through, people need to know how they contribute towards black people pain in this country. I am saying black people because we are the majority in this country and yet we own basically nothing in this country. It feels like just little structural adjustments took place after apartheid ended. We are still very much suffering from the disparities of the past.*

Most vocal Twitter™ users during #feesmustfall in the roles of collaborators, contributors and leaders displayed social influence both *informational and normative*. They had large following which they fed with latest information about the movement (informational) and confirmation of their alignment to the ideals they share with them accompanied with arguments about why they are legitimate (normative).

This is another description of the white human shield, where liberal values of desacralisation and anachronism with African cultures and values are engaged with:

*FMF3: Now I feel where... there is this divide where this is the culture where we come from but now this western civilisation, this western thing you know: if you wanna get what you want, you need to challenge certain people in a particular manner to get it... we subconsciously learn the fact that "ok, this is how these people get what they want... let me do the same. Even though it goes against what my parents taught me: but hey, what my parents have taught me so far isn't working."*

*FMF7: I think that there are situations... it's definitely improved. I can work wherever I want to, I can stay wherever I want to within reason. So, the problem I have is that if I apply for a job, I'm still seen as a black female.*

Further, the post-apartheid liberal democratic structuration of *domination/power*, enshrined in the private property clause of the Bill of rights (Constitution of RSA) which allowed the white minority to keep great wealth, is alleged, by Twitter™ posts authors, to be responsible for the oppression and precariousness of the *student qua black-child*. Additionally, the post-apartheid structuration brought about a new elite made up of mainly anti-apartheid struggle heroes and relatives who seem to have lost their way with their shameless display of corruption, clientelism, power lust and prodigious enrichment.

*Let's be frank guys. If there's money to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games, there's money to fund students. #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown  
[902 - @AndreiDamane – Student activist – 21/10/2015]*

*South Africa DOES NOT have money problems, it has MONEY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS!  
#FeesMustFall #unionbuilding  
[751 - @JustZweli – Business man - 23/10/2015]*

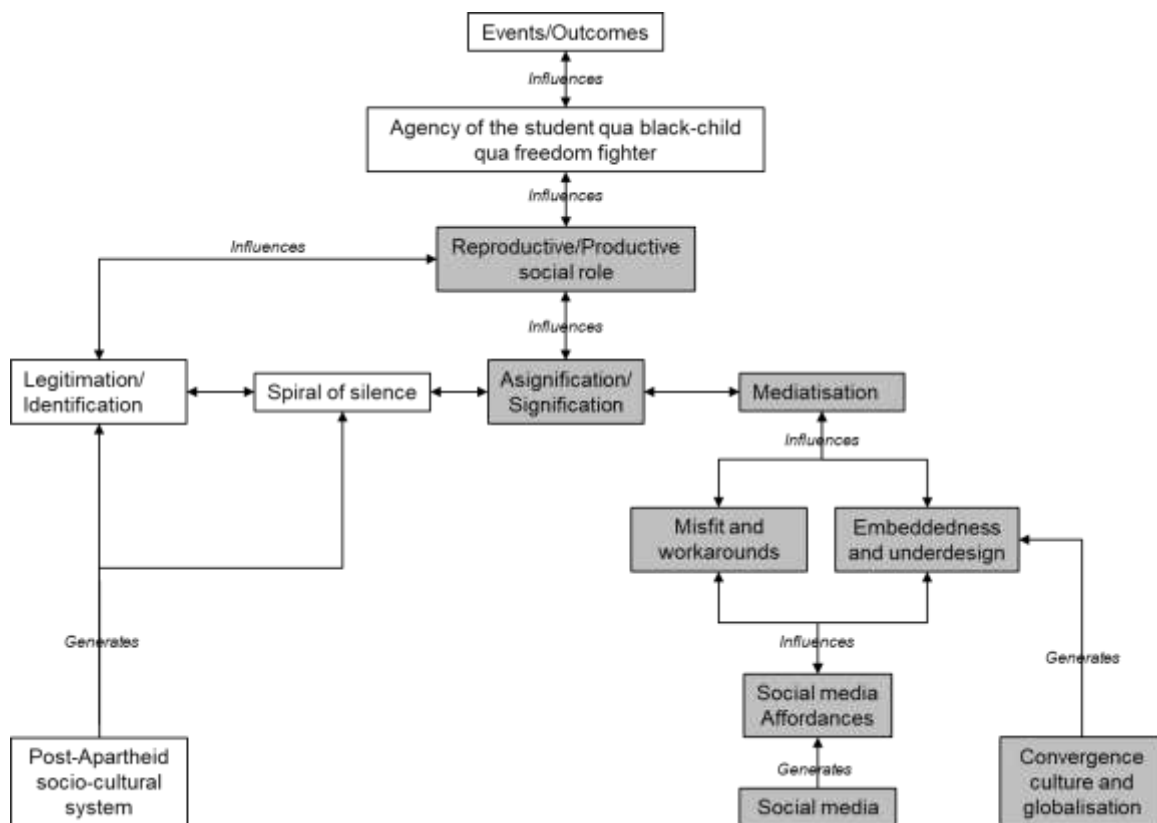
## **6.6 Mediatization and Asignification/Signification during #feesmustfall events**

This section focuses on the contribution of *convergence culture and globalisation* mediated by *social media technology* into the *mediatization* of *students qua black-child qua freedom fighter* empowered discourse of resistance through social media affordances, and the *asignification/signification* of discursive meaning they availed online.

As emergent properties of relationship and objects of systemic magnitude, *convergence culture and globalisation*, attached to the *social media technology* are causally implicated in the *degree of interpretive freedom* and compliance to values of individualism, liberal democracy and globalisation. It is also implicated in the redefinition of agents' *life chances and opportunities*. Their tendencies mediated through social media affordances which are relevant to this research include *asignification/signification* of role definition and meaning, and a contribution to the *spiral of silence* in post-apartheid South Africa.

That combination of social media affordance and genres indicates that authors were deploying their knowledge of the usage of social media platforms to communicate to members of their social networks' information about the movement, reports on events they are witnessing, their opinions, emotions and concerns. It was all purported so that the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* projects discourses of resistance legitimating its actions, and undermining authorities and their actions.

*Mediatization* through *asignification/signification* underpinned *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter's transformative agency/agential impetus* (See Figure 6.8).



**Figure 6.8: Social media mediatization as Asignification/Signification of roles and discourses**

The following subsections present findings about the affordances of the social media platform Twitter™, the *mediatization*, the *asignification/signification*, the *convergence culture and globalisation*, as well as the *social media technology* of #feesmustfall.

### 6.6.1 Twitter™ affordance for #feesmustfall

Twitter™ users during #feesmustfall suggested perceiving and exploiting seven main affordances<sup>8</sup> of the platform including: communication, usability, social networking, potential deceptiveness, content virality, entertainment and immediacy (See Table 6.15). Social networking, communication and usability were most exploited as suggested by the usage of the *Information sharing and Event reporting genre*, and the *Opinion, emotions and concerns sharing genre* were the most used in the sample analysed (See section 6.3.4a and Table 6.10). That combination of affordance and genres suggests that authors were deploying their knowledge of the usage of social media platforms to communicate to members of their social networks' information about the movement, reports of events they are witnessing, their opinions, emotions and concerns. Main Twitter™ affordances perceived and used during #feesmustfall included:

**Table 6.15: Most exploited social media affordances during #feesmustfall**

Twitter™ affordance	Number of sources	Number of references
Communication affordance	12	38
Usability affordance	11	26
Social networking affordance	11	17
Potential deceptiveness of social media	10	15
Entertainment affordance	7	11
Content virality	4	7
Immediacy affordance	5	5

### 6.6.2 Mediatization of #feesmustfall Twitter discourse

Mediatization answers the question to know how social media as a medium of communication influences or contributes in the shaping of discourse, the environment of discourse and its own transformation. Empirically, the effects of Mediatization were observed through:

- **Relay function:** Twitter™ is a social media platform that instantiates a social network relaying messages from an author down to his/her network of followers. This is done through copying, quoting, re-tweeting and linking in posts to an author's network.
- **Semiotic function:** the social media platform Twitter™ *asignifies/signifies* the messages that it carries from an author to its audience through the constrains and enablement it poses with features including:
  - o the size of messages (140 characters) which is more suitable for headlines and imprinting a sense of “*sensitivity*” to the content it displays;
  - o as well as via its capability of *aggregating various services* in the same window fostering a sense of “*control*”;
  - o there is also the opportunity for the *asignifying ruptures* it provides as a *multiplicity* generating *misfits and workarounds* while carrying contingent socio-cultural

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<sup>8</sup> See Section 3.5.5c and table 3.1 for broader list of social media affordances

*embeddedness and under-designs* connecting to loose networks of hypertextuality.

These properties allow ascribing meaning to content in creative ways.

- **Economic function:** As an emanation and even an instantiation of *convergence culture and globalisation*, it is a space for fiduciary exchanges where engagement is expected, and social currencies are traded for valuable resources in pursuit of leveraging one network into mobilisation and sustainability of the movement.

Main social media platforms utilized during #feesmustfall included: WhatsApp™, Facebook™, and Twitter™, in that order, which aggregate the display of textual content material from various websites through hyperlinks. These references were pointing at online media outlets, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, and other non-textual content.

Social media users in *reader* and *collaborator* roles exploited the technology during #feesmustfall as a warning system, source of information, private and public deliberation platform. The choice of the platform to use was based on the variation of *usability affordance* offered by a platform; WhatsApp offered more privacy, Facebook was most popular, while Twitter™ provided live-feeds published by *citizen journalist* directly witnessing and reporting on events.

**FMF2:** *Ever since I got my first smartphone, I got access to mobile social networks like Facebook, WhatsApp... I used to go off camp a number of times during the protest. When I come back, friends would be texting saying: "Guys it's hectic on campus". You know when you get to the campus, you know how to act, what to avoid or which route to take. So, through using social networks, you would be able to get updated on what's happening at school...*

**FMF3:** *My favourite, the one that I interact with the most is Facebook. I feel that Facebook that's the way you get your news feed, the video context, the videos that people shoot around the movement itself, the fact that you see police brutality in such magnitude.*

**FMF5:** *WhatsApp is I think number 1, Facebook is second... I am not too big on Twitter and Instagram. But we will talk about Twitter later because I've been using it to follow what is being happening now with that #feesmustfall movement... I am getting up to date feedback from Twitter. Facebook is kind of slow and WhatsApp if you are not in the right groups or you don't know the people who are actually there... So, Twitter had that immediate engagement with me.*

Mediatization of the social media technology has contributed to:

- the actualisation of the *convergence culture and globalisation* socio-cultural conditioning *embedded* in the social media technology by allowing access to alternative information, Eurocentric socio-cultural values and the enabling or constraining designs of functionalities on one hand;
- on the other hand, with the *agential impetus* of south African higher education students, already conditioned by the post-apartheid system, exploiting socio-technical *misfits* and producing *workarounds*, while confronting as well as occasionally integrating, arising alternative structural impingement into projecting resistance and meaningful identities in their bid to achieve Free and decolonised higher education in South Africa.

### 6.6.3 Asignification and signification in #feesmustfall discourse

This research argues that *asignification and signification* depended on the interweaving of genres and registers as they related to meaning unit as *multiplicities* reflecting the interaction of people, socio-

cultural emergent properties of relationships and technological affordances, allowing to generate a transformed meaning through *creativity*.

Social media affordances translated *social embeddedness and under-design* and *misfits and workarounds* in relative objectivity into the *mediatization* of mainstream discourse, contributing into their *Asignification/signification* when the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* projects meaning on social media.

#### **a) *Asignification in #feesmustfall discourse***

The *spiral of silence* is considered an *asignifying particle* present in the discourse performed online or muted because of its promotion of creative writing and silence. It is a tendency of the post-apartheid social system of South Africa; which seem to be transparent to the *mediatization* effect of *convergence culture and globalisation* underpinned *social media technology*.

Authors' *creativity* exploited *asignifying particles* in purported symbols allowing them to turn weakness (black-child) into strength (freedom fighter) and dodge the disapproving eye of mainstream discourse by mixing registers and using information sharing and opinion sharing genres to contribute to the struggle for free education, identify as a *freedom fighter* and expose the oppression by authorities.

The *mediatization* of social media proves also to be *asignifying*, by enforcing or promoting foreign practices and values into the discourse performed online, aligning with liberal democratic principles but conflicting with African values. It fostered a behaviour of resistance and allowed to disrupt mainstream discourse by reordering its registers (See section 6.3.4 for manipulation of genres and registers).

#### **b) *Signification in #feesmustfall discourse***

The intertextuality of *#feesmustfall* discourses of struggle, identity and oppression (see section 6.2.1) pointed at widely publicised discourses availed in documents including the Bible, the Freedom charter, the Bill of Rights in the constitution of RSA, as well as the constitutions of the ANC and the EFF which are both political parties with a socialist ideology (See appendix A5 for a list of documents). These documents foster legitimacy through compliance to the ordinances of the post-apartheid system when they are considered alone. But when applied to the living experiences of the majority of South Africans they signify a perpetuated struggle for better conditions of life, a sense of exclusion from the spoils of defeating the apartheid and a sense of oppression from the authorities of the day.

Together with values of social order, togetherness, and engagement, the *respect due to elders* is a core value of African societies as confirm the interviewees who all acknowledge the Sacro-saint character of elders and authorities wielding enormous influence over younger community members, and the challenge of engaging them. This explain why many authors tend to be *indirect and ambiguous* in the opinions they were sharing online.

*FMF5: It will take a lot of time for me to build that kind of confidence, you know. (Laughter) But once it's there, I mean I'll let him know, but very kind of gentle and polite respectful way.*

*FMF11: ok well... I think we've been thought to respect authority. Respect the office of the person, whoever maybe in leadership. I think it's like playing your part, but not necessarily being a blind follower, should there be a time when there are questionable decisions that have been made... then, you do raise your hand, but in a respectful manner.*

*FMF13: Even the way of parents. I am sure you've heard the story of white kids talking back to their parents. If you talk back to your parents when you're black, you'll get a slap... It's a thing of respect and fear and... you'll fear until you start respecting.*

These values tend to conflict with individualist Eurocentric values of human dignity, human rights, and equality, causing emotional conflict amongst people exposed to both conditioning since they must undermine one to achieve their aims.

There is an archetypal relation between the biblical story of David and Goliath, and the suggested mental representation of the relationship between *students qua black-child qua freedom fighter* and authorities. The police and security forces are portrayed as possessing sophisticated and powerful weaponry: stun grenade, teargas, rubber bullets, vehicles (*Nyalas*) and shields and other physical protections. While the students are portrayed as almost unarmed using other students or mattresses as shields, condoms to reduce teargas sting, petrol bombs, slingshots and stones as projectiles, and the agility and speed of their youth to escape arrests. These interactions were “*negotiations*”, “*cat and mouse games*”, and “*rocks and rubber flying*”. The imagery that is projected suggest that legitimate and a law-abiding protest action by students is oppressed by authorities using excessive force against the determined but defenceless *black-child*.

*#FeesMustFall Students against tuition hikes in Cape Town met w/ police tear gas, rubber bullets. #NationalShutDown  
[937 - @syndicalisms – Student activist – 21/10/2015]*

*#Fees2017 #VUT Police have pushed students back with rubber bullets & t gas. Students were making progress with their petrol bombs & rocks  
[12 - @TheresaTaylorZA - 10-13-2016 12:12:11]*

*VUT students doing anything possible to block rubber bullets! 🤔 @Noxxcee #FeesMustFall  
<https://t.co/9z4s6deJgj>  
[25 - @Tshepo\_Ndlovu - 10-13-2016 12:15:27]*

*WATCH #VUT Student uses a petrol bomb - aiming it at police. #Fees2017  
@MarykeVermaak <https://t.co/enkPjU5l0h>  
[27 - @JacaNews - 10-13-2016 12:04:08]*

The post-apartheid liberal democratic structuration of *domination/power*, enshrined in the private property clause of the Bill of rights which allowed the white minority to keep great wealth, is alleged, by Twitter™ posts authors, to be responsible for the oppression and precariousness of the *student qua black-child*. That structuration of *domination/power* is alleged to economically favour the white minority already in possession of greater bargaining power, interpretive freedom and control over strategic interests; while disfavours the previously underprivileged black majority (black student) unable to muster the cost for the opportunity sought after (Education).

Further, the post-apartheid structuration brought about a new elite made up of mainly anti-apartheid struggle heroes or relatives who seem to have lost their way with their maladministration of public affairs.

#### 6.6.4 Social media technology and global convergence culture during #feesmustfall

##### a) *Social media Technology during #feesmustfall*

Social media as technology represent that artefact accessed on a mobile device and which enables or constrains action through its affordances.

The main social media platform that was considered for analysis was Twitter™. The metadata suggested that the most used Twitter clients was *Twitter for Android* allowing most smartphone users (about 55% of the total) in South Africa to have access to Twitter™.

Then came *Twitter for iPhone* users representing about 23% of the sample; suggesting that about 78% of Twitter users who contributed online used mobile devices produced by non-South African entities.

**Table 6.16: Most used Twitter clients or App during #feesmustfall in 2015 and 2016**

#feesmustfall 2015	#feesmustfall 2016
- Twitter for Android (3146) <u>53.94%</u>	- Twitter for Android (19096) <u>54.80%</u>
- Twitter for iPhone (1602)	- Twitter for iPhone (8174) 23.46%
- Twitter web client (1084)	- Twitter web client (7576) 21.24%

This evidence permits suggesting that during #feesmustfall the social media technology used by student activists was a mobile application from either an Android or an iPhone powered device.

Further, there were more posts in 2016 compare to 2015. The disparity could have been caused by a lower uptake of the Twitter™ platform in 2015, which grew 10 folds larger in #feesmustfall users in 2016.

##### b) *Global convergence culture during #feesmustfall*

Convergence culture speaks of the control of the medium of communication by global international media conglomerates which push ideological agendas under the guise of procedures and rule of usage of the medium. They contribute in the spread of what they see as appropriate behaviour, and which represent a strand of liberal capitalism, which superimposition or integration as a socio-cultural contingent compatibility/complementarity prelude a breakdown and transformation of established local socio-cultural structures.

Twitter™ is a platform offered by an organisation for profit from the United State of America (USA), a country well known for its liberal capitalist socio-economic stance. The discourse they promote is individualist, egalitarian, slightly conservative around gender and religion and advocating for the reduction of government in size and reach. These Eurocentric values conflict with African values of togetherness, social order, respect due to elders and engagement with each other to generate

concerns, anxiety and enforcing a spiral of silence amongst authors and potential authors of #feesmustfall discourse of African descent.

The social media platform Twitter™ displays tendencies (*embeddedness and under-design*) which align with *convergence culture* when the platform is *mediatised* to *assignify/signify* mainstream discourses into resistance generating *misfits and workarounds*.

## **6.7 South African online discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance during #feesmustfall**

This section postulates a model of *social media discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance* by highlighting the emerging communication space where resistance nests and providing an explanation of the *space of autonomous resistance* as a structure of networked everyday resistance generated by *freedom fighter's* performance of social media discourse.

*How did South African students construct, sustain, or fracture alliances and relationships of domination/subordination over social media during #feesmustfall social movement?*

### **6.7.1 The impetus of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter***

The *agential impetus* of students during the #feesmustfall social movement represents a generative mechanism rooted in and emergent from students "networked everyday resistance" to hegemonic powers; allowing them to become actors of social change by contributing in various ways to social movements.

This means that within the colonial ideology of race, invoking the special case of apartheid, "*blackness*" is a non-identity, an alterity devoid of objective properties (While whiteness represents plenitude) absents non-whites from the benefits of social conditioning and alienating them from even being human beings (Hudson, 2013). Such alterity has resulted in non-whites (mainly blacks) perception of themselves as impotent lesser beings, perpetually lacking and destitute: as *black-child*. Yet, through a praxis of reconstitution (Asignification/signification) as a totality and a *process of transformative negation* which absents the alterity of "blackness" into the plenitude of "blackness" as freedom fighter, a unity in the multiplicity of plenitudes.

That spatiotemporal rhythmic benefitted from social media/Twitter, allowing users to find others enacting resistance to the hegemon on a communicative plane both public and private, uniting them for action in a plane of autonomous resistance.

### **6.7.2 The engine and the craft of #feesmustfall social media discourses**

#feesmustfall social media discourse projected a sense of collective identity for students as *black-child qua freedom fighter*, a sense of oppression as lived experience of authors and a sense of struggle as action against the hegemonic post-apartheid condition responsible for fees hikes. These dimensions of their discourse of resistance are interrelated and used to resist the hegemonic pressure they were undergoing.

They constructed a collective identity of freedom fighter by poaching anti-apartheid heroes' essence and turning it against the authority of the day. They recruited in their ranks based on the legitimacy of

the principle of being previously underprivileged, to have been promised Free Education, and for the hope of gaining the opportunity of realising their aspirations. And because of the legitimacy of their claim, they fractured the relation of domination/subordination linking them to authorities, by authorising themselves to rise and confront these authorities.

#### **a) *The engine of #feesmustfall social media discourse***

Engines are machines which transform one form of energy into mechanical energy and back. In the case of this research, it is emotional and reflexive energy which is turned into mechanical energy through internal conversations creatively navigating the challenges of power and exchanges during interaction events like the #feesmustfall social movement.

#### **b) *The Craft of #feesmustfall social media discourse***

#feesmustfall social media discourse is performed by *autonomous reflexive new freedom fighters* using very creative combinations of genres and registers to construe the identity of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter*, and asignify the *precariousness* of the *black-child* as ingrained, to signify it as the basis for the *legitimacy* of the new *freedom fighter* which actions were aimed at overcoming the *impediment of colonial remnants (colonial unconscious) in higher education* dressed in the cost to the student, as well as the *corruption of purpose of authorities* who seem detached from students struggles, unsympathetic, and allegedly more interested in power struggles and personal enrichment.

- I argue that identity, legitimacy and meaning in #feesmustfall discourse were crafted by allowing asignification and re-signification of post-apartheid mainstream discourses, the socio-cultural influences of convergence culture and globalisation mediating the technology of social media.

The research identified 6 genres and 7 registers deployed in the Twitter posts:

Asignification was noticeable through high number of metaphors and metonymies referring to intertextual and hypertextual relations with other events, texts and discourses.

- *Simple opinion sharing Twitter posts* were rich in metaphors and metonymies using the fact that meaning units are multiplicities, and that they could be *deterritorialised* or disconnected from a context of use and reterritorialized in another one;
- *Informative opinion sharing Twitter posts* were also rich in metaphors mixed with the reporting of events.
- *Information sharing Twitter posts* were prosaic and focussing on reporting on offline protest action

#### **6.7.3 Generating a “space of autonomous resistance”**

The *space of autonomous resistance* is generated by the interactions of community members enacting discursive networked everyday resistance on social media. It rises from autonomous reflexive and creativity agency, acting in *necessary resistance* against the conditions of their social

role (e.g.: Studentship), the conditions of their social identity (e.g.: black-child), the legitimacy of the hegemon (e.g.: Post-apartheid socio-cultural system), the weight of the imposed spiral of silence (e.g.: Silence), and the narrowing of their abilities to asignify/signify hegemonic frames and narratives (e.g.: liberal democracy, capitalism, rainbow nation, etc.)

The practice of #feesmustfall discourse of resistance over social media (especially Twitter™ for the case of this research) has created a space of communication where opinions and ideas are exchanged, resources are raised, plans are drawn, and operations are executed against the hegemon. That space is underpinned by readers and authors of posts social networks contributing in a networked endeavour with their posts. It is a space of humility and power, a space of individual weakness but collective strength, and a space where everyone can become a leader. It is characteristically using:

- a broadly accessible *common language*
- *Social media genres* including information sharing and event reporting; opinion, emotions and concerns sharing; resource sharing; online mobilisation, calls and pledges; RT and quote; and Silence (as a reader's genre)
- Registers of identity and legitimacy; internal conflict, demands and desires; and that of evaluation and achievements
- Using *contingently compatible meaning* derived from external socio-cultural influences and the use of social media to *asignify* (deconstruct into meaningless elements or *signaletic matter*) mainstream narratives and discourses, and the precarity of their condition; to then *signify* their failures, the empowerment of members and the coming of an acceptable ideal, following the lines of flights which the contingent meaning suggested. (NB: This is the result of transformative negation)
- Exploiting *social media affordances* of *Social networking, Communication and Usability*

Social media technology is used to contingently generate that “*space of autonomous resistance*” from its networking, communication and usability affordances knitting individual users' everyday resistance discursive actions into an online social movement. That emergent usage allows establishing social connexions and leveraging their social capital.

The *space of autonomous resistance* is an emergent property of relationship shaping the behaviour of networked individual acts of everyday resistance into a coordinated movement without one specific leader; but a constellation of leaders, some more visible than others and many not visible for long.

#### **6.7.4 The Freedom fighter and the space of autonomous resistance**

This research argues that the concept of *Freedom fighter* or ‘new’ freedom fighter refers to a social identity and role generated from the *Space of autonomous resistance*. South African community members animates it when performing social media discourse during #feesmustfall. The *Freedom fighter* is a people's emergent relational property (*a social identity*) rising from the student qua black-child legitimate longing for greater *interpretive freedom, greater bargaining power and lowered opportunity cost* to achieve education and better life prospects.

The research argues that a *space of autonomous resistance* is created whenever people use social media to connect their acts of everyday resistance through the online sharing of actions, emotion, concerns and information. In this case, social interaction is responsible for the articulation of common discourses between individuals geographically, socially and culturally apart.

The *space of autonomous resistance* is an *emergent space of communication* where social resilience and resistance against the hegemon is elated. Its autonomy stems from the fact that it is not generated by any one contributor but by networked acts of online interactions between social media contributors during the social movement.

## 6.8 Emerging propositions and concepts of #feesmustfall discourse

This section suggests an answer to the question:

*How did South African community members construct, sustain, or fracture alliances and relationships of domination/subordination over social media during #feesmustfall social movement?*

This question requires a causal explanation linking #feesmustfall social media discourses to the socio-cultural and technological context shaping them.

The section forms propositions (P) from empirical observations presented earlier describing and relating the features of the social media events/outcome of the *discourses of #feesmustfall networked everyday resistance*, the agential impetus of the transformative agency of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter*, and their *socio-cultural and technological conditioning context*.

The propositions (P) presented here align with Critical Realism as philosophical underpinning and with the realist social theory as theoretical underpinning allowing to establish conceptual priority and causal relations between concepts.

*Note: P stands for proposition and IP stands for initial proposition.*

### 6.8.1 Emerging propositions

The research proposes with reference to the empirical corroboration of the case analysis (See sections 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6), aligned with and extended by systematic elicitation and combining of prior theoretical contributions (See section 3.10.2), with critical realism assumptions (See sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3) that:

#### a) **Events /outcome: #feesmustfall Social media discourse**

- P1- *#feesmustfall social media discourse* is an *online discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance*.
- P2- The combinations of genres, registers, technology (Social media) competences, and technology affordances allowed *#feesmustfall transformative agency* to deploy 3 lines of discourse as networked acts of resistance: a *discourse of the identity of the black-child*, a *discourse of the oppression of the black-child* and a *discourse of the black-child's struggle for free and decolonised education* (See sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3)

- P3- *#feesmustfall social media discourse* stands to expose the failure and undermine the legitimacy of the post-apartheid socio-cultural system as promoting the lingering of *colonial domination/power* through its conditioning of the lives and aspirations of non-white South African youth.
- P4- *Students qua black-child qua freedom fighters* used *internal conversations* and *creativity* in performing *processes of transformative negation* to achieve needed *agential impetus*.  
*Processes of transformative negation* entailed *asignification/signification* activities including:
  - o redefining the *student qua black-child* identity into the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* identity.
  - o undermining local spatiotemporal socio-cultural impingement (post-apartheid system)
  - o *opportunistically* aligning with relevant available *contingently complementary/compatible socio-cultural and technological EP (Convergence culture and globalisation and social media technology)*
- P5- *#feesmustfall social media discourse* draws from historical *legitimacy and identification* of anti-apartheid actors, using *processes of transformative negation* influenced by the *mediatization* effect of *social media affordances* deploying *socio-cultural embeddedness and technological under-design* generating *misfits and workarounds*.
- P6- *#feesmustfall social media discourse* was performed by *student qua black-child qua freedom fighters* in necessarily *complementary/compatible, contingently complementary/compatible and contingently contradicting/incompatible social roles* (See sections 6.5.1b)

**b) Events /outcome: #feesmustfall discursive acts of networked everyday resistance**

- P7- *#feesmustfall discursive activities* generate *#feesmustfall social media content* (See sections 6.3.2, 6.3.3 and 6.3.4)
  - o Content included: text, images and hyperlink addresses (URL) to other resources
  - o Discursive activities included: Combination of genres and registers, social media activism (Mobilisation, campaigning and resource sharing); Content forwarding; online and offline private deliberations; and Citizen journalism
- P8- *#feesmustfall social media content* generates *readers'/users' experience (empowerment and precariousness)* of *#feesmustfall social media discourse* (See sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.1)
- P9- *Discursive activities* (social media networked everyday resistance) of the legitimately identified *#feesmustfall* transformative agency (*student qua black-child qua freedom fighter*) generate a *space of autonomous resistance* (See sections 6.3.3, 6.5.1 and 6.5.2)

**c) The agential impetus of the transformative agency of the student qua black-child qua freedom fighter**

- P10- The *creativity and autonomous reflexivity* of the transformative agency of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* generated *#feesmustfall social media discursive activities* (See sections 6.4.1, 6.4.3 and 6.3.2)

- P11- The *creativity and autonomous reflexivity* of the transformative agency of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* influenced the quality of the experience of #feesmustfall social media discourse (See sections 6.4.1, 6.4.3 and 6.3.1).
- P12- The *creativity and autonomous reflexivity* of the transformative agency of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* influence their definition and animation of *reproductive/productive social roles* (See sections 6.3.2, 6.5.1 and 6.5.5)
- P13- The *agential impetus* is the collective intentionality of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighters* generated by their *autonomous reflexivity and creativity* counterbalancing the influence of their socio-cultural (Post-apartheid and convergence culture and globalisation) and technological (Social Media) context (See sections 6.4.1, 6.4.3 and 6.7.1).

**d) Socio-cultural and technological conditioning context**

- P14- *Post-apartheid socio-cultural* emergent properties of relationship generate mechanisms of:
  - o Power/domination (See sections 6.5.4 and 6.5.5)
  - o Legitimation and identification (See sections 6.5.1, 6.5.2 and 6.5.5)
  - o Spiral of silence (See sections 6.5.3 and 6.5.5)
  - o Asignification and signification (See sections 6.6.3 and 6.6.5)
- P15- Emergent properties of relationships of *convergent culture and globalisation* generate mechanisms of *mediatization* through *embeddedness and under-design* (See sections 6.6.2 and 6.6.5)
- P16- Generative mechanisms of:
  - o Power/domination (See sections 6.5.4 and 6.5.5)
  - o Legitimation and identification (See sections 6.5.1, 6.5.2 and 6.5.5)
  - o Spiral of silence (See sections 6.5.3 and 6.5.5)
  - o Asignification and signification (See sections 6.6.3 and 6.6.5)
  - o Mediatization (See sections 6.6.2 and 6.6.5)
  - o Social media affordances (See sections 6.6.4 and 6.5.5)

Interact with one another in their influence of *post-apartheid reproductive/productive social roles*.

- P17- Generative mechanisms of *legitimation and identification* with those of *asignification and signification* have a greater relationship of influence with *post-apartheid reproductive/productive social roles* animated by transformative agency involved in *social media discursive activities* (See sections 6.5.1, 6.5.2, and 6.6.3)
- P18- *Post-apartheid reproductive/productive social roles* influence the *creativity and reflexivity* of the transformative agency of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter* (See section 6.5.1, 6.5.2 and 6.4.1)

**e) Generating a space of transformative negation**

- P19- #feesmustfall space of autonomous resistance is a communication space of transformative negation (See sections 6.7.2 and 6.7.3)
- P20- #feesmustfall space of autonomous resistance is generated by the interactions of creative and autonomous reflexive student qua black-child qua freedom fighters enacting discursive networked everyday resistance on social media (See section 6.7.2).
- P21- A space of autonomous resistance is generated whenever transformative agents use social media to connect their acts of everyday resistance through the online sharing of actions, emotion, concerns and information (See section 6.7.3).
- P22- Post-apartheid reproductive/productive social roles influence the space of autonomous resistance of the #feesmustfall social movement (See section 6.5.1 and 6.7.2)
- P23- The space of autonomous resistance of the #feesmustfall social movement influences the definition and animation of Post-apartheid reproductive/productive social roles (See section 6.5.1 and 6.7.2)

**6.8.2 Emerging categories/concepts**

Table 6.17 under A2 appendix presents the main categories/concepts emerging from the analysis of the empirical data.

Table 6.18 suggests that initial propositions IP1 to IP6 (See Table 3.8) were substantiated and further extended into the propositions emerging from the analysis of the empirical data.

**Table 6.18: Emerging concepts of the ReMDA**

Main concepts	Sub-concepts/categories	Propositions	Initial Propositions
<b>Events/Outcome</b>			
Social media discourse	<i>Online discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance</i>	P1, P3, P8, P20, P21	IP1
Experience of social media discourse	<i>Social empowerment and Precariousness</i>	P8, P10, P11,	IP2, H6
Social media content	<i>Text, hashtags and URL to other content</i>  <i>Genres, registers and narratives</i>  <i>English Language</i>	P7, P8	IP3
Discursive activities	<i>Social media activism</i>  <i>Citizen journalism</i>  <i>Strategic orientation of messages (Manipulation/combination of Genres, registers, narratives and social media affordances)</i>  <i>Networked everyday resistance</i>	P3, P9, P17	IP4
<b>Transformative agency / Agential impetus</b>	<i>Student qua black-child qua freedom fighter</i>	<i>P1, P2, P4, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P17, P18, P20, P21</i>	IP1, IP5 & more
	<i>Internal conversation</i> <i>Reflexivity and creativity</i>	<i>P4, P6, P10, P11, P12, P13, P18, P20, P21</i>	

Main concepts	Sub-concepts/categories	Propositions	Initial Propositions
<b>Socio-cultural and technological emergent properties</b>		P13	IP5 & more
Post-apartheid Socio-cultural EP	<i>Domination /Power</i>	P3, P4, P14, P16,	
	<i>Reproductive/productive social roles</i>	P6, P12, P16, P17, P18, P22, P23	
	<i>Signification / asignification</i>	P4, P14, P16, P17	
	<i>Legitimation / Identification</i>	P5, P9, P14, P16, P17	
	<i>Spiral of silence</i>	P14, P16	
Convergence culture and Globalisation	<i>Mediatization</i>	P5, P15, P16	
	<i>Embeddedness and under-design Misfits and workarounds</i>	P5, P15	
Social media technology	<i>Social media affordances</i>	P5, P16	
Space of transformative negation	<i>Space of autonomous resistance</i>	P4, P5, P9, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23	

## 6.9 Postulating a realist model of social media discursive action

*#feesmustfall social media discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance* suggests the existence of a Realist Model of social media Discursive Action (shortened as ReMDA). The ReMDA is an explanatory model allowing to describe and explain the emergence of social media discursive practices. It is presented as a nomothetic model constituted by constructs interrelated according to propositions theoretically generated with reference to its critical realist underpinning. The ReMDA suggests that online discourse is an emergent, intentional and creative process. The ReMDA carries an emancipatory axiology from its Critical realism and its M/M approach underpinnings. It affirms that agents are the efficient cause of action, and that their actions are mediated by socio-cultural and technological relational emergent properties.

The ReMDA model stipulates that online discourse as practice is the result of the interaction between a *transformative agency* supported by a high level of *agential impetus* and its contextual conditional socio-cultural and technological context. These interactions have observable outcomes in performance deploying *asignified/signified content over social media and via readers/users' experiences of social media discourses* during social movement. These interactions follow a process of *transformative negation* aiming at changing society and contingently generate a *space of autonomous resistance*, an instance of spaces of transformative negation (See section 2.1.8 on real negation).

The ReMDA also suggests that the *agential impetus of students qua black-child qua freedom fighters* mediated *involvement* in social media discursive acts of networked everyday resistance. That agential impetus emanated from the spatiotemporal build-up of discursive resistance under the combination of the necessary post-apartheid socio-cultural system, contingent convergence culture and globalisation, and the contingent affordances of social media in performing discourse over the platform Twitter™ and others. That spatiotemporal build-up determined the ability of *students qua black-child qua freedom fighters* to reflect upon their condition (*interpretive freedom*) considering the opportunity they

could afford and shaped the social media discourse they produced to advance the ambitions of the collective action they were contributing to.

During #feesmustfall social media events, there was a primary agency (*students qua black-child qua freedom fighter*) interacting with the corporate agency of authorities (government and other higher education decision makers) around the achievement of “*Free and Decolonised Education*”. That interaction resulted in the shaping of the social reality in at least 2 folds including the achievement of *free education* and *a sense of empowerment* experienced by the authors of Twitter posts. The discourse that permitted these changes had an exceptional spatiotemporal situation as engine, which allowed for the crafting of a discourse of *transformative negation*, a discourse of resistance. That discourse reshaped both actors (identities) and context (socio-cultural conditioning) in the process. The description of the rise of that discourse of resistance suggested a #feesmustfall model of social media discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance (See Figure 6.9) contextualising a *realist model of social media discursive action (ReMDA)* (See Figure 6.10).

### 6.9.1 Realist modelling of social media discursive enactment of the #feesmustfall movement

This section suggests the Realist Model of social media discursive enactment of #feesmustfall networked everyday resistance (See Figure 6.9).

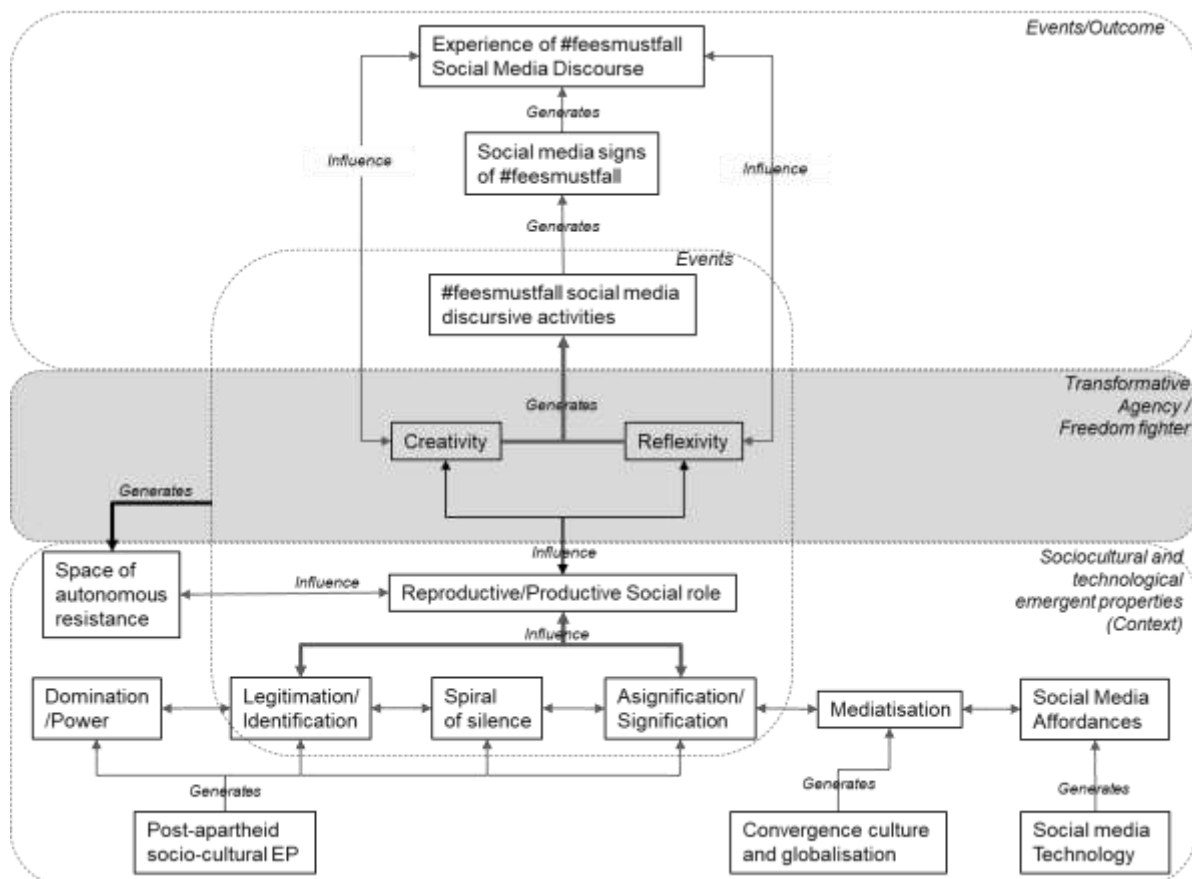


Figure 6.9: Realist Model of social media discursive enactment of #feesmustfall networked everyday resistance

### 6.9.2 The Realist Model of social media Discursive Action - ReMDA

In Figure 6.10, the ReMDA is further abstracted and decontextualized to provide a theoretically generalised model. Entities and objects presented in the model are positioned according to a principle of ontological priority. As such, *socio-cultural and technological context* is prior to *transformative agency/agential impetus*, which is prior to *social media content* and to the *experience* of it.

- Single arrows represent generational causal relations between entities or objects
- ↔ Double arrows represent dialectical relationships of influence between relational emergent properties (complementary/compatible or contradictory/incompatible with local spatiotemporal circumstances).

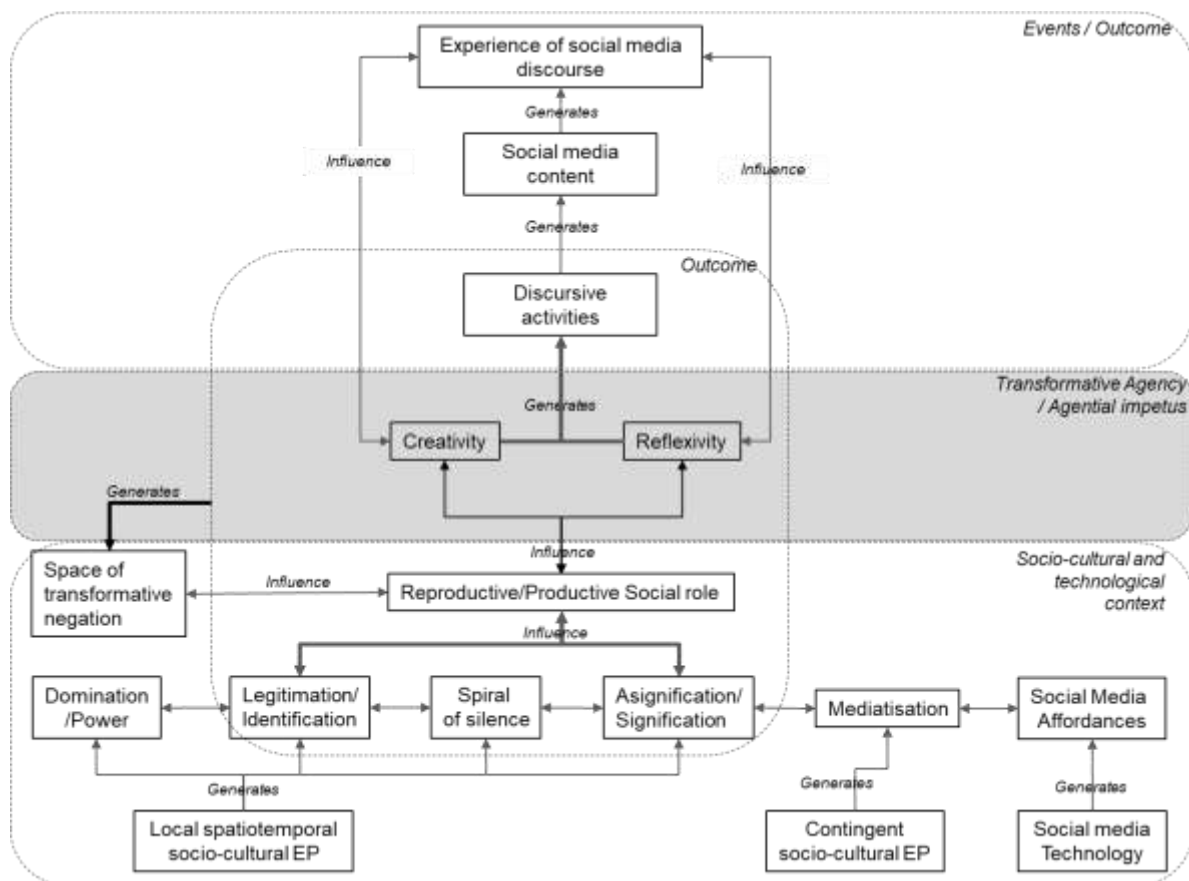


Figure 6.10: The Realist Model of social media Discursive Action (ReMDA)

### 6.10 Conclusion of Chapter VI

This chapter has suggested that #feesmustfall social media discourse of resistance was constituted by 3 main strands: a *discourse of the identity of the black-child*, a *discourse of the oppression of the black-child* and a *discourse of the black-child's struggle for free and decolonised education*.

These discourses suggest bravery in the face of adversity, generating experiences of empowerment due to the great number of students and supporters of the movement, social media facilitation and historical legitimacy; and experience of precariousness due to the dominance of the post-apartheid mainstream discourses and the potential deceptiveness of social media. These discourses deployed creative combinations of relevant social media genres and legitimating registers, exploiting asignifying and signifying elements in their expressions to turn their weakness into strength and undermine the power of authorities along the lines of the socio-cultural trajectory of the country's values and history. That emergent usage of social media has risen in a context conditioned by post-apartheid socio-cultural structures which tend to distort, silence and devitalise local socio-political life; in a context of wait-hood for South African youth struggling to find a role to occupy in society and in a context of ICT pervasiveness placing content generation in users' hands.

This chapter has provided an explanation of the social media discourse of #feesmustfall as an online discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance performed by a transformative agent. The #feesmustfall transformative agent or student qua black-child qua freedom fighter, benefiting from a critical agential impetus, acted as a creative and autonomous reflexive to negate the hegemony of their circumstances by undermining the legitimacy of post-apartheid authorities and bolster their own. They used a process of asignification/signification, with the help of the tendencies of the convergence culture and globalisation carried through by the social media technology and its affordances, to navigate the spiral of silence and the negative effects of the mediatization of social media. In so doing, they generated a communication space of transformative negation, suggested here as a space of autonomous resistance.

That explanation allowed to abstract a Realist Model of social media Discursive Action (ReMDA) from the data. At this point the model doesn't account of the spatiotemporal rhythmic which generated the contextual transformation which allowed for #feesmustfall social movement and its social media discourse of resistance to occur. In Chapter VII, a transcendental account as an analytical tale of the emergence of the social media discursive enactment of #feesmustfall networked everyday resistance will *retroductively* follow a trail of significant social, cultural and technological historical events able to explain the advent of the #feesmustfall social media discourse as the outcome of historical spatiotemporal rhythmic.

## **Chapter VII: The analytical tale of the social media discursive enactment of #feesmustfall networked everyday resistance**

This chapter deploys an analytical history of emergence of South African *student qua black-child qua freedom fighters' discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance* on social media during #feesmustfall social movement. It is estimated that the emergence of their social media discourse of resistance was the result of a spatiotemporal rhythmic of *transformative negation* of some features of the post-apartheid condition. The analytical history of emergence is framed following sequences of the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (M/M approach). This transcendental and transfactual argument, uses the data collected that is related to areas of context history identified in the exploratory research. It further corroborates the realist model of discursive action (ReMDA) as the starting point for the *retroductive* move towards determining the elements which interacted and transformed for the #feesmustfall social media discourse to be.

This chapter develops a transcendental and transfactual argument by answering questions 5, 6 and 7 (See section 1.4 and Table 4.1).

### **7.1 Approach to the analytical history of emergence**

The analysis of data from archived social media content, interviews data and document review proceeded iteratively with the development of the analytical tale.

Social media are socio-technical systems. The social practice of communication that constitute their use by *student qua black-child qua freedom fighters* as social agents interacting during social movements is conditioned by technological affordances, socio-cultural systemic constrains and enablement. That use of technology mediating *student qua black-child qua freedom fighters'* reflexivity and creativity as they attempted to transform their conditions through discourse.

There is an understanding that a community readiness estimated based on its access to computing and telecommunication devices and networks at a given time would be a basis for their ability to access social media and should translate in their competencies when using them as part of their praxis of online resistance.

The morphogenetic cycles considered are rather short (about 10 years' time span), due to the fast pace of technical and social changes which swept through South Africa during the periods considered.

The analysis is concerned with the transformation of the discursive practice of students as they integrate social media in their everyday lives and during collective actions. It means that for each epoch the analysis attempts following the progression of socio-cultural (socio-political - *public opinion*), technological (and socio-technical - *social media*) and discursive (*mainstreams discourses*) conditions, interactions and elaboration in South Africa, leading to #feesmustfall online events.

Social and cultural domains are analysed concurrently as they intersect with each other and with the social media technologies, to generate the circumstances which agents encounter during interactions.

Each analytical cycle will engage emergent properties for social structures (SEPs), culture (CEPs), agency (People - PEPs) and the social media technologies; their causal powers; and the resulting interactions from which new configurations of emergent properties are elaborated. It is therefore important to keep track of the mediatization of mainstream discourses by social media, as they reflect social and cultural transformation during the epochs considered as a critical influence through embeddedness and under-design configuring affordances to motivate the ascription of the black-child from just destitute to re-signify it as a freedom fighter.

In order to develop the analytical tale, the research applied a 4 steps procedure<sup>9</sup> including:

**STEP 1** *Tentative adoption of a set of epochs characterized by times of stability and times of change.* Starting at the end of a period, the research suggests first-order emergent properties (FEPs) for social structure, culture, technology and people, conditioned from previous interaction.

**STEP 2** Then, potentialities arising from FEPs in Step1 in the form of *contradictions and complementarities* are identified as explained in Sections 4.7.2 and Tables 4.6 and 4.7.

**STEP 3** Describes and analyses the *actions of agents* in the form of interactions with the conditioning effects of extant social and cultural structures. It is from these that we obtain a new configuration of emergent structures as second-order emergent properties.

**STEP 4** Analyses the new configuration of emergent structures arising from agent interaction and social action in Step 3. This concludes the analytical cycle and prepare the configuration for iteration back to Step 1 for the next sequence.

## 7.2 Implementing the analytical approach

### 7.2.1 Step 1: Epochs or analytical periods of focus

The research elected 3 epochs or periods of time to focus on including: First epoch 1989 to 1997; Second epoch 1998 to 2007 and third epoch 2008 to 2017 (See Table 7.1). These epochs are significant in the spatiotemporal trajectory of South Africa as a country in the world in social, cultural and technological terms; as its mainstream discourses and the agency of students transforms according to the rhythmic variations of key social and cultural events, contextual conditions, and moments of stability.

**Table 7.1: Epochs/Time periods characterised by moments of stability and moments of change**

Epochs/Time periods	Social event	Cultural event	Technological event
1989 – 1997	Colonialism Government of National Unity End of Apartheid End of border wars and military conscriptions New Liberal democratic constitution of RSA TRC Welfare state / reconstruction and RDP GEAR	Africanism Pan-Africanism Black consciousness Colonial unconscious Born-free Rainbow nation Attentionism Culture of protest	Television + Computing + Internet IRC IM AOL Yahoo!
1998 – 2007	Democratisation Affirmative action Xenophobia	Colonial unconscious Africans in the media Corruption claims	Social media + mobile telephony + Y2K + Mxit

<sup>9</sup> (Archer, 1995; Njihia, 2008; Trosper, 2005)

	Service delivery protest Attack on the WTC (9/11) War on Terror Globalisation Neo-colonialism	Tenderpreneurship	+ Facebook + eCommerce Twitter™ is born M-pesa and mobile money
2008 – 2017	Global economic/financial crisis First African American president Single parenthood Waithood Xenophobic attacks New Social movements Arab Spring Marikana massacre Occupy Movements Black Lives Matter Creation of the EFF #Rhodesmustfall #FeesMustFall Land reforms	Telling African stories Fallism Africa rising narrative White heritage Black Twitter	Social media + smartphone blackberry, iPhone (Android vs IOS), + WhatsApp + eCommerce + bitcoin Twitter™ changes news

Table 7.2 presents the 4 common strategies and their different manifestations at systemic and social integration levels. Table 4.8 suggests a set of 16 possible generative mechanisms immediate effects to frame causal accounts of emergence.

**Table 7.2: Conditions for morphostasis and morphogenesis (Archer, 1995, p295)**

		SYSTEMIC INTEGRATION (Cultural, Structural or Technologic)		Outcome
		High	Low	
SOCIAL INTEGRATION	High	Necessary complementarity (Compatibility)	Necessary contradiction (Incompatibility)	Morphostasis
	Low	Contingent complementarity (Compatibility)	Contingent contradiction (incompatibility)	Morphogenesis

The M/M approach account of 4 social levels of analysis: the “social position or situation” determined by First-order Emergent Properties - FEP; “social roles”; “institutional level” and “System level” EP (See section 3.9.4 and Table 3.4). Social roles and institutions constitute a 2nd order structural level, while systems with social-cultural interaction and socio-cultural elaboration are 3rd order structural level.

*System integration* refers to the *orderly or conflictual* relations between the parts of any *social system* while *social integration* refers the *orderly or conflictual* relations between *social actors* (Archer, 1995; Willmott, 2000). Social (structural) orders are necessarily and internally related to one another within an area and at a point in time.

Before summarizing how this happens, we shall first outline the Morphogenetic Cycle to delineate the crucial intersection of SEPs, CEPs and TEPs in agent interaction.

### 7.2.2 Step 2 to 4: Morphogenetic/Morphostatic cycles

Critical realism aims at explaining observable events/outcomes through the generative mechanisms which interactions caused their rise.

The analytical narrative or tale that is presented here uses the findings from the case of the social media discursive enactment of the #feesmustfall social movement and data from the constitution of

the case context. This analytical tale is framed according to the M/M cycle (See section 3.9.9) and the model of configuration of socio-cultural and technological integration of contingencies (See Table 4.7). For every epoch, steps 2 to 4 are assessed.

The post-apartheid social system was found to be rather conservative, presenting *necessary incompatibilities* requiring *corrective social compromise* and *containment* during interactions.

Cultural systems in post-apartheid South Africa throughout the three epochs examined here, presented both *necessary and contingent contradictions* with limited complementarities expressed as *protective systematisation* in *reproducing* control over vested interests (Capital and knowledge) for the whites; and as *opportunistic specialisation sectioning* communities into potential “progressists” (rather liberal and socio-democrats) with a belief in the Rainbow Nation and Born-free narratives, and radical conservatives and communitarians (right or left-wing ideologies) of nationalist, communist, fanonian and/or black consciousness stock (Fallism).

The social media technology contributed as a *necessary complementarity* to *protect* in order to *reproduce* or maintain the expert dominance of whiteness; while it represented an *opportune contingent complementarity* allowing an *ideational specialisation* of university students. Social media is described through its mediatising effect generated by the social influence of the messages its carries, its affordances and its social embeddedness and under-designs.

Social, cultural and technological conditioning (first-order emergent properties – FEPs) are discussed at the same time for each epoch. That discussion is followed by separate engagements for social and socio-cultural interactions, as well as outcomes of social and cultural system elaboration (second-order emergent properties - SEP). The discussion for each epoch is concluded with the morphogenesis of agency engaging with South African community members’ achievements in interpretive freedom, reflexivity and creativity while engaging with the post-apartheid condition and the social media technology. Each account of epochs is summarized in an outcome standing as an explanatory recounting of emergent transformation of discourses in the temporal trajectory leading to #feesmustfall discourse on Twitter™.

Twitter posts, interview and document quotations with Twitter handle and participant code ID are provided as evidence of claims.

The chapter continues with the account of the first epoch in a transitional period leading into post-apartheid which seeded the #feesmustfall discourse.

### **7.3 First epoch (1989 – 1997): A South Africa without apartheid**

This epoch (1989 - 1997) represents a time of transition from the end of apartheid to the stabilisation of the post-apartheid era. During that period some significant social, cultural and technological events are observable, reflected in changes in the public opinion and reflected in changes in mainstream discourses. It is important to mention that social media are still in their infancy. In this section, selected events are presented articulating institutional and systemic level emergent properties including Government of National Unity, End of Apartheid, End of border wars and military

conscriptions, TRC, GEAR and RDP, New liberal democratic constitution of RSA, and Welfare state / Reconstruction. These changes signal a morphogenesis of non-white agency into a further empowered category and imply that *social (structural) elaboration* is the main outcome of this epoch. (See Table 7.3)

**Table 7.3 Socio-cultural and technological events during the first epoch between 1989 – 1997**

1 <sup>st</sup> Epoch	Social event	Cultural event	Technological event
1989 – 1997	Colonialism Government of National Unity End of Apartheid End of border wars and military conscriptions New Liberal democratic constitution of RSA TRC Welfare state / reconstruction and RDP GEAR	Africanism Pan-Africanism Black consciousness Apartheid and colonial unconscious Born-free Rainbow nation Attentism Culture of protest	Television + Computing + Internet IRC IM AOL Yahoo!

### 7.3.1 Social and Cultural conditioning (First order Emergent Properties - FEP)

**Socio-political:** At that time, the majority of South Africans especially those of African descent did not have access to the Internet due to Apartheid. Apartheid was a racial segregation social system of colonial inspiration instituted in 1948 in South Africa. It excessively skewed access to resources and opportunities to the white minority in the country, while depriving the non-white (African, Indian, Chinese and Coloured) majority of rights, resources and opportunities. Non-white South Africans under the hegemony of apartheid were mostly poor and presented acute identity issues. There was no-such-a-thing as “Free Education” for non-white South Africans. The educational system enforced the supremacy of white by providing them with the best tools available while reducing the non-whites to so called “bantú education” purposefully of lesser quality, with crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and underqualified teachers and lecturers. That education system was the result of successive racist regulations including: Bantu education act 1953; Extension of University Act 45 of 1959; Coloured person’s education Act 1963; Indian Education act 1965. As a reaction to such an oppression many took on to resist by following non-white oriented ideologies carrying black consciousness, Pan-Africanism, Africanism (Africa for Africans) and anti-apartheid discourses. Non-white students were effectively a destitute *black-child*; yet, they kept resisting and demonstrating in line with the momentum of the Soweto Uprising of 1976 against the imposition of Afrikaans as the language of tuition.

1989 saw the end of the South African Border War<sup>10</sup>, P.W. Botha resigning from the presidency, F. De Klerk replacing him, while freed Nelson Mandela was entering in political negotiation with the National Party on behalf of the ANC to end the apartheid system. South Africa elected a Government of National Unity led by Nelson Mandela to stir the transitional process towards an all-inclusive and

<sup>10</sup> (Edlmann, 2012, 2015)

democratic South Africa in 1994. *Young white boys' military conscriptions* were ended in 1995<sup>11</sup>. South Africa adopted a new Liberal Democratic constitution in 1996 revoking apartheid laws and setting up the path for a post-apartheid era. Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC from 1996) was constituted, and the new government organised over ambitious programs to counter-balance the ills of apartheid (Stagnant economy, unemployment, inequality, culture of violence and poverty to name a few) through broad welfare system and infrastructure development policies known as Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) and Growth, Employment And Redistribution (GEAR). Higher education was prioritised through the establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education (1995), the Green Paper on Higher Education (1996) and later the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) (1999). These initiatives were implementations of some the resolutions of the South African Congress Alliance known as Freedom Charter. That period of transition was punctuated by violent riots, killings and other criminal actions which threatened to derail its outcome as apartheid was fading away. In addition, it witnessed the constitution of Chapter 9 institutions (*The Public Protector, South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission), the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), the Auditor-General and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)*), free elections, the first African led government of the country and an unprecedented experience of freedom of movement for non-whites.

**Socio-technological:** In 1989, Sir Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web: a global hypertext space allowing to connect various resources through the reference of a Universal Document Identifier (UDI). That version of the Web known as Web 1.0 allowed to publish documents which could only be read but not modified or commented upon.<sup>12</sup> The apartheid system resulted in the white minority enjoying unparalleled exposure, adoption and use of the Internet and Web services, while non-whites were kept ignorant of them. They were rather irrelevant to non-whites occupied with surviving the abuses of apartheid. The radio, the television, the press and the postal service were the ICTs of the day; while the Internet was one of these new things which companies were getting excited about. For non-whites, owning a computer was too costly, knowing how to use it was scarce, and everything that was circulated was related to activities and events from north America and Western Europe with whom the whites were culturally aligned; hampering any velleity of the web amongst non-whites.

Also, the Telecommunication act of 1996 ushered an era of broadening of the telecommunication industry as well as a race for the complete coverage of the country and capture of the largest share of the cellular telephony market in South Africa. MTN Ltd is founded in 1994 from M-Cell offering GSM and data over its cellular network. Vodacom Ltd is founded in 1994 in a joint venture between Telkom™ and Vodafone™. Telkom SA Ltd was established in 1990 as a wireline and wireless telecommunication provider in South Africa. These companies will be instrumental in the technological inclusion of non-whites in the country.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://theconversation.com/the-lingering-unspoken-pain-of-white-youth-who-fought-for-apartheid-46218>

<sup>12</sup> (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh, & Farsani, 2012)

**Socio-cultural, technological and discursive:** Colonialism and Apartheid have delayed non-whites discovery and use of technological advances. North American and West European media have long bestowed a sense of white socio-cultural superiority suggested as being more sophisticated and fulfilling than any other. The languages of the whites were standard, their religions most appropriate, their political organisations better suited for human elevation; they were discoverers of all knowledge and inventors of all technology; and their legends, myths and heroes were archetypical. Non-white cultures were ill-represented in the media of these days (The radio, the television, the press and the postal service). African cultures were thus undermined, and the African character was projected as an incomplete subject, incapable of science, organisation or even bravery. Media houses including the public SABC and the privately owned broad-based multinational Naspers supported the government of the day.

Amongst non-whites, under the apartheid regime, discursive practice represented *repressed aspirations and struggle against apartheid*. In post-apartheid era, discursive practices focused on *reconstruction and compromise*.

### **7.3.2 Social system and social interaction: compromise in containment and integration in solidarity**

This first epoch witnessed the end of Apartheid with political power moving from the National Party to the ANC and allied (including the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)). The transitional Government of National Unity (GNU) started to disaggregate with the withdrawal of the National Party citing “*exclusion of joint-decision making from the final constitution*”. Yet, the liberal democratic tone of the 1996 constitution enshrined private property and maintained the privileges of the white minority while opening the doors of opportunities to non-whites.

**Systemic integration:** Apartheid was *contingently incompatible* with the aspirations of the non-white majority who won the 1994 election; the GNU was constituted to *eliminate* it. Apartheid institutions and agencies were terminated; legislations were repealed; practices were outlawed; and restrictions based on race or gender were lifted.

**Social integration:** Yet, the racial and ethnic divide and socio-economic inequality within the social fabric of the country remained profound. There was a need to *correct the situation* by bridging cultural and social contradictions as necessary through *cultural syncretism* and *social compromises*. The ideal of the *rainbow nation* was born and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set and meant at creating a sense of justice. Government programs and policies targeted the destitute non-white with the *redistribution of opportunities*. The myth of the *born-free* or the South African born in or after 1994 was created.

In these last days of apartheid and early days of post-apartheid, the tendency was towards *containment* in social interactions. The new social system required *compromises* from social actors bound to contain their differences during interactions. Even though they lacked the financial means to access opportunities, non-whites were given great *bargaining powers* to turn into *negotiating strength*: For instance, they could research their topic of election, at their institution of choice to get into their

dream professional careers; they were also allowed access to use and enjoy the benefits of the Internet and web services<sup>13</sup>.

The move to post-apartheid South Africa made the strappings and benefits of the privileges of the white minority a *necessary complementarity* to be *protected* by cultural *systematisation* throughout the country and social *integration* in all structures of society by means of social *solidarity*.

### **7.3.3 Social/structural elaboration: compromise**

The liberal democratic aspirations of the country enshrined in the constitution were a compromise in the name of local peace and international good will; but it was never a solution as the implementation of the Freedom Charter implied a social democratic aim including a redistribution of wealth and land. There was a *need* to do away with apartheid, maintain socio-economic internal peace and external good will while creating the conditions to increase the bargaining power of the majority of non-white South Africans. This translated into keeping the social position of domination of white who accumulated wealth during the years of apartheid while giving them a wide sway over economic matters around the country, redeeming their reputation of oppressors so that they could now be worthy commercial partners by international commercial entities. Yet, that did not mean that they stopped being racist or any pro-non-whites overnight. While the external signs of apartheid were disappearing, the signs of freedom were still too shy to be seen.

#### **a) *The power and the strength of money:***

In post-apartheid South Africa, the white minority is the greatest owner of capital with the power to hire for employment and feed government with tax revenue; in addition to a biased international commercial community boasting with neoliberal capitalist ideology of free and fair exchange of goods and services between equal subjects. In addition, the offspring of the white minority attended elite universities where they were exposed to the best of technological (including ICTs) and scientific achievements in the western world; they had a clearer perspective on the workings of the world. They had tremendous bargaining power and interpretive freedom allowing them to maintain a social and economic position of dominance upon non-whites despite the official end of apartheid. Most people with access to ICTs and with ICT skills were whites.

#### **b) *Young political power:***

On the other hand, the non-white majority social situation needed to be improved. At the exit of the apartheid era, *previously underprivileged*, the non-white majority was destitute, entering a liberal capitalist environment without enough *bargaining power* to afford most available goods and services. They still had to go to the white man for employment and for capital; they were now prey to the whims of the owners of capital who could keep their old colonial habits in the new era behind the smoke of liberal capitalism. Access to university was still under the hospices of the *bantu education* while

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<sup>13</sup> (Reddy, 2006)

Universities and Technikons, with already higher fees, were still not accessible to most of them. They had very limited access to ICTs and too few could display much ICT skills.

The ANC alliance which was governing South Africa at the time, had to contend with the international business community pressurising them into accommodating the desiderata of the hegemonically white business community of the country; which in turn was using their *negotiating strength* derived from diverse expertise and financial power, and cultural affinities to further anchor their influence by taking control of various economic institutions. In the end, the governing representatives of non-whites had to make *compromises* with their recently achieved political power to face the expertise and financial powers of whites; and create a social environment which allows non-whites to participate in the free and fair exchange of goods and services. That would require *affirmative actions*.

#### **7.3.4 Socio-cultural interaction: unification**

Socio-cultural interaction was a discovery of otherness under the shade of a liberal capitalist tree. Whites maintained dominance, yet, with the walls of apartheid downed, cultural exchanges were bound to flourish, and the hegemonic western culture was bound to lose ground to alternative ideas of non-white cultural origin. During this epoch, with the TRC initiative to create a sense of justice, media initiatives to reshape the discourse towards mutual inclusion, the celebration of the *born-frees* and the promotion of the universalist idea of the *rainbow nation*, there was an ideal in socio-cultural interactions aiming at *unifying* previously socially antagonistic realms of ideas under the possibility of cultural similarities in terms of individual aspirations, achievements and collective progress.

Yet, collaborative efforts initiated for that purpose failed to point at fundamental questions of the empowerment of non-whites; the existential threat and the guilt felt by whites rather aware of the horrors they inflicted on non-whites; and the colonial unconscious.

##### **a) *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission - TRC initiative***

The TRC worked at exorcising the demons of the past by allowing victims to face perpetrators to achieve some closure and for perpetrators to know some peace as families forgive. The pains were still in the bodies and in the hearts. The dead would not return, and the deeds could not be taken back. The way forward was an anguish of guilt and anxiety for the white, and of trauma for the non-white who will not be avenged.

##### **b) *Media initiatives***

South Africa already enjoyed a long tradition of newspapers with centenary titles like the “Sunday Times or the Cape Argus or Die Burger” by the time apartheid ended. The national broadcaster the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) suddenly offered a wide variety of programs displaying what was forbidden under apartheid and which characterised the lives of non-whites. Digital media were mostly absent.

### c) *The born-frees*

South African citizens born just around and after the end of apartheid, at the inflection of this first epoch, were called “*born-frees*” because they were never to experience the shackles of apartheid. The expression was mainly directed to non-white but seemed to have found resonance with many young whites who also identify as such as suggest the respondent FMF7 who claims it while acknowledging his position of privilege and the guilt and anxiety that goes with it.

### d) *The rainbow nation*

South Africa has wanted to project an image of a “*rainbow nation*”, a multicultural but united nation as suggested Archbishop Desmond Tutu and elaborated by president Nelson Mandela. Many commentators have seen in that image a failed attempt at imposing peace between fractured communities while ignoring the reality of ongoing racism, inequality, poverty and crime.

#### 7.3.5 Cultural elaboration: syncretism

Socio-cultural interaction fostering *correction* through *unification* generated *cultural syncretism*. Cultures hadn't change across racial and cultural divides. Cultural syncretism was an acceptable façade mainly signified by the ideal of the *rainbow nation*. The reality was that:

- Whites were not ready to embrace non-white cultural offering, hanging onto the persistence of the colonial unconscious<sup>14</sup>;
- Non-whites already attuned to the living in a white culture showed an interest in integrating many of their values including the ostentations of success they carried, the quasi universality of their languages; as well as the central importance of education, science and technology.

#### 7.3.6 Morphogenesis of agency in the First Epoch

With the end of apartheid, the primary agency of non-whites and mostly Africans entered corporate agency with the achievement of political power, providing them with enough bargaining power to seat at the negotiating table of structural change, with the financial hegemony of white capital. New non-white corporate agents enacted swift structural changes dismantling apartheid and setting up the pace for broad base developmental programs implementing the promises of the Freedom charter.

The new primary agency is *emerging empowered by its political success and eager to appreciate a society without apartheid*: a society in which they can finally access better education, healthcare, infrastructure, etc. They were beginning to experiment with technology mediated discourses through the ICTs of the day, acquiring an inclination for telephony and especially mobile telephony.

#### 7.3.7 Outcome of the First Epoch: Structural elaboration

Socio-cultural and technical elaboration of South African community members discursive action during social movements.

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<sup>14</sup> (Hudson, 2013)

This first epoch ended up with the new conditions of post-apartheid South Africa redistributing resources and opportunities according to new rules and new institutions; a very ambitious inclusive representative democracy displaying all the strappings of neoliberal capitalism, and a lot of hopes. However, the cultural landscape was yet to transform. The white man was no longer the political ruler of the country but was still wielding colossal power in terms of knowledge and capital. The non-white now had political power but little money, with immense social challenges to tackle.

The discursive landscape was boasting with calls for unity, peace and for the attainment of freedom, after *the narratives of the Rainbow nation and the born-free*. The practice was moving from a *discourse of repressed aspirations and struggle against apartheid*, to a *discourse of reconstruction and compromise*.

Television was the technology of the day and the Internet one of these new things better known by whites, when South Africa tasted the post-apartheid era.

#### 7.4 Second epoch (1998 - 2007): Our hopes froze onto the sky

This second epoch represents a time of entrenchment into the post-apartheid era. During that period some significant social, cultural and technological events are observable, reflected in changes in the public opinion and reflected in changes in mainstream discourses. It is important to mention that social media are emerging at the same time as mobile telephony, popularising the capability to communicate instantly to one's social networks and even to self-publish to the entire world. In this section, selected social, cultural and technological events are presented articulating their effects at institutional and systemic level emergent properties including Democratisation, Corruption claims, Service delivery protest, Xenophobia, Globalisation, Attack on the WTC, War on Terror and Neo-colonialism.

**Table 7.4: Socio-cultural and technological events during the Second epoch between 1998 - 2007**

2 <sup>nd</sup> Epoch	Social events	Cultural events	Technological events
1998 – 2007	Democratisation Affirmative action Xenophobia Service delivery protest Attack on the WTC (9/11) War on Terror Globalisation Neo-colonialism	Colonial unconscious Africans in the media Corruption claims Tenderpreneurship	Social media + mobile telephony + Y2K + Mxit + Facebook + eCommerce Twitter™ is born M-pesa and mobile money

Most important changes were observable in the apparition of *opportunistically contingent cultural practices* compatible with legal and constitutional provisions regarding gatherings and the right to protest, in addition to a sense of confidence due to the new dispensation which protected all citizens instead of only a few. These changes signal the morphogenesis of agency into a further empowered category and suggest that *cultural elaboration* is the main outcome of this epoch.

### 7.4.1 Social and Cultural conditioning (FEPs)

#### a) *Socio-politically*

Socio-politically the democratisation of the country is being entrenched with the enactment and amendments to the constitution and to hundreds of acts and policies. During this epoch, the constitution of South Africa was amended 11 times to allow for the application of democratic principles and of the promises of the Freedom Charter. Many legislations are past including acts reorganising local government in 1998; Employment Equity act of 1998; amendments to the National Education Policy act and Higher Education act of 1999 and later amendments; Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) act of 2003-2004; Yet, many apartheid era regulations are maintained and amended.

At the same time, latest statistics suggest that over half of South African children are growing in a single parent household (Implied in terms of living arrangements). It is suggested that colonisation, apartheid, poverty, labour migration, urbanisation, adolescent pregnancy and HIV (The South African HIV prevalence was then estimated at about 10% of the population.) are the most important causes of such a phenomenon.<sup>15</sup> Important implications of that phenomenon are child labour and engagement in the governance of the household. The second epoch witnesses the apparition and growth in service delivery protests under the protection of the constitution but despite the Gathering act of 1993. The tensions are due to the perceived slowness of economic redress engaged by the government, corruption, the abuses of “*Tenderpreneurship*” and the flaunting of wealth bestowed by the political elite; many newly promoted civil servants found themselves embroiled in corruption scandals.<sup>16</sup>

On 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the USA falls prey to a series of terrorist attacks allegedly executed by the fundamentalist Islamic organisation known as Al Qaeda. The towers of the World Trade Centre (WTC) are destroyed and the Pentagon building is severely damaged. Thousands are killed, and the country launches the *war on terror* which places much strains on commercial transactions around the world concerning the relationship a country might have with a country designated as terrorist or helping terrorism. Without a UN mandate the USA and allies invaded Iraq, accusing the country of supporting terrorism, developing nuclear weapons and using non-conventional weapons of mass destructions.

This is also the time when the globalisation of trade surged with globally distributed workforces, global supply chain and global markets fostered by the Internet through e-Commerce. User generated content became a commercial power and convergence media houses has become the rule.

South Africa benefitted from its long-standing relationships with the West through technological and knowledge imports.

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<sup>15</sup> (Kaufmann, De Wet, & Stadler, 2001; Richter, Chikovore, & Makusha, 2010; Richter & Desmond, 2008; Richter & Morell, 2006; Sarsour et al., 2011; Statistics SA, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> (Berning & Montesh, 2012; H. Dawson, 2014; Erasmus, 2014; Lodge, 1998).

## **b) Socio-Technical**

This second epoch witnesses the spread of personal computing, the Internet, mobile telephony, and the rise of social media. Many American start-up companies focus on offering eponymic applications and services over the World Wide Web, monetising the advertisement they provide for brands. People quickly move from the SMS to chats. Mxit™ and Facebook™ are ruling mainstream usage<sup>17</sup>.

Twitter™ is just born in 2006 as a micro-blogging web service.

South African traditional media outlets, already present as print and broadcasting, are showing a growing interest in the digital media.

State Information Technology Agency Act (SITA) of 1998; the Promotion of Access to Information act (PAIA) of 2000, the Electronic Communications and Transactions act (ECTA) of 2002; Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-related Information Act (RICA), 2002.<sup>18</sup>

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa is established by the ICASA act of 2000 to regulate both the telecommunication and broadcasting sectors.

Neotel is a privately-owned fixed line telecommunication service in South Africa which obtained a licence to operate from ICASA in 2006, breaking Telkom's monopoly and extending the coverage of xDSL and Fibber throughout the country.

The country vigorously embraced computers and digital media, availing them on all campuses of public universities, as well as availing them for free in public libraries so that everyone could have access and enjoy their benefits. These spaces, universities and libraries became the places where the youth and many previously underprivileged people came to meet with the Internet and the Web.

## **c) Socio-cultural, technological and discursive**

In parallel to the superposition of many European liberal cultural values above African values (Believes in science, individualism, and the power of market), cultures of *attentism* and of *protest* especially over service delivery appeared around the country as it was alleged that government owed the people some spoils of the victory against apartheid and only listened to protest. Mainstream discourses of equality, diversity and empowerment started to be questioned as they were not reflected in the realities experienced in previously disadvantaged communities. The ANC sees many members leaving for other parties.

### **7.4.2 Social interaction: containment**

The new structuration of South Africa extends the full protection of the state to non-whites and fosters their empowerment with various incentives present in the constitution of the country, legislations, policies and agencies deploying welfare programs. More and more previously underprivileged (mostly whites) South Africans access higher education based on merit or enforced quotas and with the

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<sup>17</sup> (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2011)

<sup>18</sup> (Thornton, Carrim, Mtshaulana, & Reburn, 2006)

support of various loans, grants and bursaries mechanisms. The EE and BBBEE policies present businesses with *affirmative actions* enforced by compliance orders and penalties, while being rewarded by tax rebates and other mechanisms. The aims of the legislations are to widen the basket of opportunities for non-whites by providing for a positive discrimination as a remedy to employment and entrepreneurial discrepancies between whites and non-whites. The mining mogul Patrice Motsepe who fully exploited the opportunities availed and founded African Rainbow Minerals, is a living testimony of what these legislations achieved, allowing the country to witness its first non-white billionaire. Yet the majority of the wealthiest were white, and the largest corporations in finance, mining, retail, transport and the media were also controlled by whites. Also, with the end of apartheid, and the end of privileges, more and more whites started to find themselves in poverty due to *Affirmative actions* which was making it very difficult for poor whites to recover using government support.

#### **a) *Systemic integration***

Post-apartheid South Africa is characterised by the implementation of Affirmative Action as a policy of the state through Employment Equity and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment acts and agencies in an attempt at rectifying the legacy of apartheid with a temporary positive discrimination to generate a more balanced sense of equality.

The Internet and mobile telephony which were reaching the country, at that time, were availed without racial distinctions, allowing all South African access through various means (e.g.: Government sponsored municipal and provincial libraries and commercial outlet like MTN or Vodacom).

#### **b) *Social integration***

During this epoch, racial antagonisms are still rife at play where the financial power of the whites can be put to contribution in terms of hiring or investing. However, the new laws and policies forces white capital to dispose of an important presence of non-white in their organisations while preventing them from discriminating against them. That was meant to *contain* the effects of racial friction by providing a space where whites and non-whites can access opportunities through the *social compromise* of the *rainbow nation* ideal.

#### **7.4.3 Social/structural elaboration: compromise**

Non-whites, and especially black Africans, started to take advantage of the opportunities created by EE and BBBEE legislations and policies. These bargaining powers has allowed for the rise of a non-white, mainly black, middle class and to have an increasingly diverse racial representation at all levels and activities in society which benefited from their implementations. They were able to use them to access opportunities in education, employments and businesses. These regulations came into force in this second epoch.

#### **7.4.4 Socio-cultural interaction: unification**

With the structural elaboration of post-apartheid South Africa, community members got to discover the charms of liberalism and its individualist focus, as opposed to African cultures more community oriented, while maintaining important traces of their African roots.

The non-white youth adopted the use of mobile telephony offered by Vodacom and MTN and was strongly enticed into and the Internet with great enthusiasm despite the cost. All first-year students of university had a Computer and Internet literacy component to pass. With the advent of Mxit text instant messaging service working on feature phones as well as smartphone. These devices and systems allowed an intimate access to other people and to information which would have been costly to get via a newspaper and not always objectively from the television or the radio.

Many urban single parent families led by women which were culturally undermined in African traditions could now thrive under the protection of the new prescriptions which also tends to undermine provisions for gender relationship in these traditions.

#### **7.4.5 Cultural elaboration: syncretism**

Beside the great cultural impact of European culture on South African-African cultures noticeable in the keenness of non-whites and especially blacks to seek and adopt things which might be of value in European spheres. The whites did not flow on the other side to acquire African cultural features. In addition, blacks would behave according to the environment and would retain strong bonds with their cultural background due to the still fragile social position in which most of them lived.

The use of computers and digital media was growing at a very fast pace with the use of platform like Mxit and Facebook even suggesting calls to integrate them in curricula as means to deliver content to students. In addition, social media became synonymous of a cultural feature for the youth and the studentship; giving it an identifying status. Students could categorise each other according to the brand of mobile phone or preferred social media platform. As an example, most white and affluent non-white students would use Apple™ and Blackberry™ products, while less fortunate students would use Samsung™, Nokia™ or Motorola™ devices.

These influences were causing students to change their perspective about how to engage with their social predicaments. They opportunistically elaborated a form of syncretism that was not satisfactory; but was signalling the stabilisation of *a cultural posture of opposition and resistance* able to juggle with blending African cultures with European and neoliberal cultural influences.

#### **7.4.6 Morphogenesis of agency in the second epoch**

The cultural system of the higher education studentship was profoundly influenced by post-apartheid structural transformation, convergence culture and globalisation, as well as the discovery and access to computers, digital media and services.

The non-white youth that was being groomed in universities knew much precarity and sometimes partook in service delivery protest; they knew more about the resources available in the country, the place of the country in Africa and in the world; they met with white privilege and suffered the bias of

industry which would not hire them for reasons linked to their financial challenges (No work experience, no transportation means, etc.). Further, it quickly became obvious that most of their lecturers were white and the authors they were studying from Europe or north America, as if whiteness alone was capable of expertise. Yet, they could also notice how their white classmates were challenging the system for their personal gain and were getting away with it.

The result of these experiences was the growth of frustrations over the *equality of façade* of the *rainbow nation* ideal and the inadequacy of its *born-free* offspring shackled by financial challenges, ushering a primary agency demanding change and transformation as stipulated in the “Freedom Charter”. Despite the presence and influence of student bodies in universities, the general frustration was not yet channelled into an organised and legitimate framework for collective action to ensue in structural transformation.

#### **7.4.7 Outcome of the Second epoch: Cultural elaboration**

The second epoch resulted in *cultural elaboration* as a significant outcome because the primary agency of the higher education studentship was forming a cultural posture of opposition and resistance to their hardship (*student qua black-child qua freedom fighter*). It was in response to increasing frustration from the challenges of accessing higher education and the uncertainty of finding an employment afterwards. In addition, their use of social media in deliberation about their experiences was growing fast enough to demarcate them from older generations as a special group sharing similar life chances: a destitute and frustrated primary agency opposed and resistant to post-apartheid conditions. The second epoch delivered a frustrated higher education studentship opposed and resistant to post-apartheid conditions, bestowing a cultural posture blending African cultural values, Western cultural influences and the handling of the Internet and mobile telephony as a special means of communication.

The discourse they were performing then was a *discourse of social re-identification* into a *cultural posture of opposition and resistance* due to both the hopes and the frustrations of the social compromise and cultural opportunities generated by the new rules and institutions (*Affirmative actions*) of post-apartheid South Africa carrying the rainbow nation and the born-free narratives, but also capital and expert obstructions placed upon the aspirations of the previously underprivileged.

### **7.5 Third epoch (2008 - 2017): It was time for Rhodes and his fees to fall**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> epoch has witnessed dramatic socio-political events internationally and locally in South Africa. Internationally, a man of African descent becomes president of the USA; a global economic/financial crisis sweeps the world; Occupy Movements erupts in the western world; the Arab Spring happens; Hossama Bin Laden is killed; and Libya is broken down. In South Africa, Jacob Zuma takes the reign of the ANC and of the country; corruption inquiries are everywhere; the Marikana massacre happens; Fallism emerges with #rhodesmustfall and #feesmustfall, driven by a youth fraught by waithood. In the end, South Africa starts a new cycle of structural elaboration with the proclamation of Free education, the broad consultation on transformation in the higher education and the tabling of land reform.

**Table 7.5: Socio-cultural and technological events during the third epoch between 2008 - 2016**

3 <sup>rd</sup> Epoch	Social events	Cultural events	Technological events
2008 – 2017	Global economic/financial crisis First African American president Single parenthood Waithood Xenophobic attacks New Social movements Arab Spring Marikana massacre Occupy Movements Black Lives Matter Creation of the EFF #Rhodesmustfall #FeesMustFall Land reforms	Telling African stories Fallism Africa rising narrative White heritage Black Twitter	Social media + smartphone blackberry, iPhone, + WhatsApp + eCommerce + bitcoin Twitter™ changes news

### 7.5.1 Social and Cultural conditioning (FEPs)

This third epoch brought impetus to higher education students' primary agency as they meet the world and find one-another over social media. These events are followed here as they join towards the #feesmustfall movement online.

#### a) *Socio-political*

In 2008, the world took a frantic pace. This third epoch ushered in with the 2008 Global Financial Crisis which started with the 2007 subprime mortgage (Low interest rates encouraged mortgage lending) market crisis in the USA. It collapsed major financial institutions around the world and wiped out record amounts of wealth. The crisis was suggested to have been caused by *“high risk, complex financial products; undisclosed conflicts of interest; the failure of regulators, the credit rating agencies, and the market itself to rein in the excesses of Wall Street”*<sup>19</sup>. The crisis highlighted capitalism as a flawed and unstable system, that exacerbates greed and tends to generate inequality and poverty.

It is with these dramatic events, that Barack Hussein Obama II, an American politician of Luo (a Kenyan ethnicity) descent, is inaugurated president of the United State of American (USA); surprising commentators of all boards and signalling a global shift in the perception of race. One important feature of his campaign was a reliance on social media platforms, from which it is said his campaign slogan (“Yes, we can”) originated<sup>20</sup>. Not long after his inauguration, North Africa and the Middle-East are shaken up by a wave of revolutions which toppled regimes and was known as the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring or Arab Revolutions was characterised by an important participation of the youth, massive use of social media and massive demonstration occupying public spaces for weeks. It started in 2010 and faded in 2012, setting up a trend in protesting for events to come. On their hills came the Occupy Movements which washed over the world with people taking to the streets and occupying public spaces in protests of social and economic inequalities in countries including

<sup>19</sup> (Levin & Coburn, 2011, p. 1)

<sup>20</sup> (L. Bagui & Parker, 2009)

Australia, Spain, the USA, Denmark, Mexico, Nepal, South Korea, Nigeria or the UK, between 2011 and 2016. These events provided a nudge of motivation and inspiration for the events to unfold.

In 2008, Julius Sello Malema is elected president of the ANC youth league. He supports the election of Jacob Zuma as ANC president. He will later fall out of grace with the ANC and be expelled after a disciplinary hearing. He will go on to founding the EFF – Economic Freedom Fighters in 2013, aiming at providing economic freedom in their lifetimes to the majority of South Africans still living in poverty. The ideology of the EFF was built out of the frustration and malaise in South African society, in tune with students' aspirations. The party policies are Marxist with some anarchist tendencies; claiming the Freedom Charter as one of their founding ideals, as its members see themselves as the real heirs of the generation which produced it.

In 2009, Adv Thuli Madonsela is appointed Public Protector of South Africa by then president Jacob Zuma. She will later publish reports implicating him and many individuals in his entourage in corruption of high offices and public enterprises. One of her reports recommended further inquiries on what she termed "state capture" to describe the level of influence a certain group of individuals have gained because of their association with the president of the country. President Zuma time as head of state is marked by numerous corruption scandals and an unprecedented number of attempts by opposition parties to *impeach* him.

In 2012, The SAPS – South African Police Service opens fire on a crowd of striking miners at Marikana; killing about 34 and causing the deadliest post-apartheid police use of force against civilians. The event was compared to the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, perpetrated by the police of the apartheid regime. The workers were demanding a salary increase.

In that environment, the ANC led government of South Africa is seen as a corrupt and violent hegemon not interested in the wellbeing of the people it is supposed to represent in this post-apartheid era. These events play into the colonial narrative which suggests that non-whites are unable to manage the country because of their lack of competence and rationality. It got to a point where people wanted the president gone just to save face.

In March 2015, the #rhodesmustfall movement erupts at the University of Cape against the alleged lack of transformation in the institution despite the country being in a post-apartheid era. The movement reopens discussions over the unfinished business of the Rainbow Nation in which some members do not want to integrate and continue with colonial attitudes and biases.

In October 2015, the #feesmustfall social movement rampages university campuses over increasing university fees preventing students from accessing higher education. Private security companies and SAPS are called-in to secure campuses with little success. The movement will wane down when the president proclaims that "universities fees will not be increased across the country in 2016". The movement is revived in October 2016 and becomes more violent with more damages to property and injury to people. This time, there is a greater focus on decolonising the educational landscape. Twitter™ becomes the favourite students' platform for news update regarding the movement (Growth in South African users' adoption during #feesmustfall events). On the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2017, Free

Education is proclaimed for the South African poor; giving an important victory to the #feesmustfall social movement.

Free education and decolonisation are promises of the Freedom Charter which implementation is a commitment of the ANC and of the many parties which emerged from its internal tensions.

With #rhodesmustfall and #feesmustfall movements the radical ideology of Fallism has developed. Fallism rejects the post-apartheid system and opposes neoliberal capitalist exploitation and 'new imperialism' while carrying the themes of de-commodification, de-coloniality, intersectionality, solidarity and anti-sectarianism. During the events of #feesmustfall, the EFF aligned with Fallism.

### **b) Socio-Technical**

In this 3<sup>rd</sup> epoch, social media became mainstream media for news and interpersonal communication in South Africa and around the world. Facebook™ and Twitter™ became the places for users live reporting of events with videos located on YouTube.com™; while private debates are taking place on WhatsApp™.

That special position of social media led the opening of commercial viability for eCommerce network-oriented platforms like GitHub (SaaS for software development and project management), Airbnb (Marketplace and hospitality service) and Spotify (Music streaming service) which disrupted entire industries and set the pace for eCommerce companies with a social networking outlook, offering platforms and services to their customers. Ride-share and taxi hailing companies like Lyft, Uber, Go-Jek, Didi or Gett mushroom around the world. Cryptocurrencies based on blockchain technology and social networking mature enough to attract the attention of central banks with many outlets accepting them in exchange of goods and services. Products such as M-pesa in east-Africa or Mobile money elsewhere brake through as the most important means of transferring money and making payment over cellular networks in sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2008, Mobile phones powered by an open source operating system named Android, hit the market. That operating system is developed by the Open Handset Alliance (OHA); a consortium of device manufacturers, components manufacturers, Software developing companies, and telecommunication network operators. Between 2007 and 2011, Blackberry™ OS, Symbian OS and IOS mobile devices are the foremost contenders in the South African market before the arrival of Android™ phones. Blackberry™ and Apple™ mobile handsets worked on proprietary operating systems; creating a monopoly preventing other actors from entering the market. With the release of Android phones which quickly gained the same quality as proprietary releases, that monopoly was broken: allowing a greater number of manufacturers to enter the fray as well as drastically reducing the cost of owning an Internet enabled mobile device. Since 2011, Android phones are dominating the market. In 2016, over 75% of South Africans were reported possessing an Internet enabled mobile devise<sup>21</sup>. As a main source of information and communication devise, the mobile-phone equipped with social media could be found in the hands and pockets of every student at South African university.

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<sup>21</sup> (E. Berger & Sinha, 2012; Qwerty, 2018)

### **c) Socio-cultural, technological and discursive**

This epoch sees the *born-frees* facing Waithood and embarking upon Fallism as an ideology acknowledging their frustration, their challenges and their aspirations. Still, the born-frees performs a complex discourse both radical and progressive, exclusive and inclusive, suggesting a variety of opinion moods with the emergence of a white sense of belonging to the country which accepts its diversity and a non-white outlook which is claiming a white cultural heritage.

#### **7.5.2 Social interaction: containment**

Post-apartheid conditions foster waithood and perpetuate colonial disparities under the guise of liberalism and capitalism. The *student qua black-child qua Fallist freedom fighter* must endure prospects of waithood above a threat of a life in precariousness in the face of the wealth of whites. With such social positioning, the non-white *born-free* who are also *student qua black-child qua Fallist freedom fighters* are coming to age and must contend with a biased academic and employment environment which they claim, is still considering them as inadequate, especially emphasising their inherent lack of costly basic infrastructural capabilities like possessing a vehicle or the lack of senior expertise for entry level positions. White dominance is still asserted in these spaces despite structural attempts to shape the environment through *affirmative action* regulations like EE and BBBEE enforcing the inclusion of non-whites in all levels of activities in organisations.

The use of social media acted as a gel in the networks linking students. It helped to fixate a basic understanding of the issues at hand: the failures of the post-apartheid era and the need for action to redress the wrong. The discourse of Fallism found a bed amongst the disgruntled and the frustrated of the system and could flow without resistance within the networks supported by social media from one university campus to the next one across the country.

The wrath of the born-free (often child of a single mother): As a consequence the *student qua black-child qua Fallist freedom fighter* rose against the hegemonic barrier depriving them from jobs and the achievement of a socially and culturally dignifying life. However, many parted ways with it when it comes to implementation: they are not ready for the radical call the ideology is suggesting for. Hence in the Twitter posts authors call for non-violence, the contribution of many whites was welcomed. The discourse that is purported on social media and especially on Twitter™ is mostly Fallist, identifying the student as *qua black-child qua freedom fighter*, legitimizing the collective action with the freedom charter and shared lived-experiences, while grounding exchanges around the demand of “free and decolonised education” in a discourse of resistance and a discourse of hope expressed by interview respondents but marginalised on Twitter™.

#### **7.5.3 Social/structural elaboration: compromise and integration**

The bargaining power of non-white university students was not particularly improved since they were now facing waithood or uncertain work prospects at the end of their training despite *affirmative actions* implemented by government. Affirmative actions served as compromises to keep the country safe while communities were left to engage into integration. White communities were slower in integrating non-whites; but their born-frees who were mingling with them started to see them as alter ego and

started to engage with an identity that encompasses non-whites, in terms of lived experience or as part of social interactions. As they rose up in protest to demand free and decolonised education they unveiled new identities and deployed a multi-layered discourse of resistance which acknowledges the past, claim European influences and call for both ideas of an African South Africa and of a South Africa of compromises and integrations. These identities came to the movement charged with the *bargaining power* bestowed upon them by affirmative action regulations, the legitimacy of the freedom charter and the added impulse of the mediatization of social media. As a collective action, they used their bargaining power as *negotiating strength* and were able to achieve the proclamation of Free education for the poor in South Africa.

#### **7.5.4 Socio-cultural interaction: unification and cleavage**

The South African socio-cultural space of interaction was augmented with various ideas coming from around the world. International events including the many “occupy movements”, the “Arab Spring”, the Marikana massacre, Barack Obama’s “Yes, We Can” slogan, in addition to the quasi pathologically uplifting usage of social media *united* into post-apartheid South African society in support of the frustration felt by the students. Their influences seem to have been felt as *legitimation of action* as necessary and with greater chance of success. They were also felt as asignifying lines of fracture, allowing to interpret what was once right as wrong. For example, the negotiations of 1994 to end apartheid were now seen as betrayal since they allowed for the perpetuation of colonial mentalities.

In addition, the use of social media appeared to be essential for the movement to take place. The “Arab Spring” suggested how powerful it is; the occupy movements against social hegemonies were testimonies of how it could be done; while the election of president Obama confirmed that a proper usage of social media could change the course of history.

Social media allowed Fallist to interact with all South African communities, providing authors with a great sense of empowerment through the legitimacy of the collective action they were part of.

#### **7.5.5 Cultural elaboration: syncretism and pluralism**

The unification of disparate ideas resulted in cultural *syncretism and pluralism*, layering the South African cultural ground between white and non-white communities experimenting inter-cultural engagement through acknowledgement and identification with the country’s *rainbow nation narrative*. There are also those who are keeping to themselves as special communities trying to undermine others in their survivalist strategies (white exceptionalism, ethnic nationalism, Africanism, etc.).

It appears, especially amongst South African students, that there is a growing culture that is willing to look passed the colour of the skin in. That culture claims features of other local cultures as part of their cultural stock and envision an inclusive country of opportunities for all; while many non-whites are hesitating with the *born-free identity*, and many in the white youth are daring to identify with it.

These processes suggest that South Africa as an integrated socio-cultural body is still in construction and would require more structural transformation before reaching greater stability.

### 7.5.6 Morphogenesis of agency in the third epoch

With the use of social media, students could count on one another's strengths as they rise against the hegemony hampering their progress in life. As protests over fees became rather regular at campuses at registration times and before final exams, it seems that it escaped university leadership that they were dealing with a broad socio-cultural issue (systemic order) which they had to strongly motivate to government.

It is during this third epoch that disparate individuals benefited from the facilitation provided by social media to connect their personally defined acts of resistance with that of others, *creating a primary agency* with the collective identity of the *student qua black-child qua freedom fighter*.

That identity enjoyed *autonomous reflexivity* in performing the content generation over Twitter™ through *ambiguity and indirectness* in identifying and creatively overcoming the *spiral of silence* and *local and international hegemonic* signs, *asignifying* the destitution of the *black-child* and *re-signifying* it as motivation and legitimation for collective action carried by a *freedom fighter* collective identity. Despite their frustration over the post-apartheid condition their actions targeted the transformation of precise areas of their situations. They were not out on a revolution but on an overdue correction: free and decolonised education.

### 7.5.7 Outcome of the third epoch: Structural elaboration

The outcomes of the third epoch in the trajectory of the emergence of #feesmustfall social media discourse were of three main orders: identity, cultural and social in relation to the use of social media in communication during social movement. They were all connected to the aspirations of the *born-frees* which outlook to life is more complex and demanding than expected.

These outcomes suggested the failure of the *necessary corrective syncretistic* strategy in the face of a reality of *contingently eliminative* strategies of *cultural pluralism* due to socio-cultural *cleavages* of recent memory conditions (apartheid) and actual vested interests (economic, financial and scientific dominance).

The narratives of the *Rainbow nation* and *born-frees* presided over the emergence of a sort of proto-South African identity cutting across communities which acknowledges the past and claims inheritance of all the socio-cultural influences which have traversed the country; bestowing black and white *born-frees* as well as blacks who dare to behave like whites; while others are looking for plurality and difference. Besides this new South African identity, there is an identity of the *black-child* which has become a *freedom fighter* to achieve better life prospects; rejecting the post-apartheid condition.

The most important successes of Fallist movements at South African universities were the proclamation of Free higher education by the government and the acceleration of economic transformation in the country with nation-wide debates as well as policy propositions to amend previous *affirmative action* regulations. These events have thrust the apparition of a *discourse of socio-economic transformation and globalisation* entering the new morphogenetic cycle of higher education students' social media discourse at the end of #feesmustfall.

## 7.6 Realist sequence of the emergence of South African social media discourse during #feesmustfall social movements

This section answers the question:

5. *Before the emergence of social media, how were South African community members' socio-cultural and agential emergent properties of relationships like?*
6. *How has the emergence of social media affected South African communities' socio-cultural interactions?*
7. *How has South African community members' discourse transformed to emerge empowered on social media during social movements?*

The emergence of #feesmustfall social media discourse is presented here as the result of a transformative negation, a continuous process of negating absence in remedy to the inconsistencies of the post-apartheid era, a process paced according to social, cultural and technological events over the years with a south African contextual reference. That transformative process was analysed using the M/M cycle as a demonstration of the transformation of the product of interactions between post-apartheid discourses, western socio-cultural influences, and technological influences.

In other words, retroductively, the emergent usage of social media to enact online discursive resistance is the result of 3 epochs of social, cultural and technological transformation interacting with their space of autonomous resistance.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> epoch** resulted at a systemic level, in *structural transformation* with the repeal of Apartheid laws and institutions, the creation of democratic institutions and the setting up of affirmative actions. At the time, the logic of transformation was about *correction* taking the shape of containment at a micro level through the narratives of the *Rainbow nation* and the *born-free* as the starting point for the new South Africa. Individuals started out with high hopes of almost overnight radical change; but as the time went on, it was becoming clear that whites have kept their supremacy through leveraging their hegemonic economic power to maintain their grip on their vested interests. At a macro level, whites and non-whites were bound to *compromise* despite social incompatibilities (colonialism, vested interests) and cultural contradictions (individualism vs collectivism, capitalism vs socialism, European vs African values).

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> epoch** resulted in *cultural elaboration* as a significant outcome because the primary agency of the higher education studentship was forming a cultural posture of opposition and resistance to their hardship (*student qua black-child qua freedom fighter*). It was in response to increasing frustration from the challenges of accessing higher education and the uncertainty of finding an employment afterwards. In addition, their use of increasingly powerful social media as a source of information and in deliberation about their experiences was growing fast enough to demarcate them from older generations as a special group sharing similar life chances: a destitute and frustrated primary agency opposed and resistant to post-apartheid conditions.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> epoch** resulted in the emergence of #feesmustfall social media discourse as a first step to a *structural elaboration* in three main dimensions: identifying, cultural and social in relation to the use of social media in communication during social movements. They were all connected to the aspirations of the *born-frees* which outlook to life is more complex and demanding than expected. These outcomes suggested the failure of the *necessary corrective syncretistic* strategy in the face of a reality of *contingently eliminative* strategies of *cultural pluralism* due to socio-cultural *cleavages* of recent memory conditions (colonialism and apartheid) and actual vested interests (economic, financial and scientific dominance).

The narratives of the *Rainbow nation* and *born-frees* presided over the emergence of a sort of *congruent proto-South African identity* cutting across communities which acknowledges the past and claims inheritance of all the socio-cultural influences which have traversed the country; bestowing white *born-frees* and blacks who dare to behave like whites, all with a greater sense of empowerment and an important use of social media in their interactions. They were also out on social media as *freedom fighters* but were taking issue with *fallism*, because of its radical rhetoric conflicting with some of their socio-cultural affinities.

There are other identities looking for difference and plurality. Besides the new South African identity, there is an identity of the *black-child* which has become a *freedom fighter* to achieve better life prospects; rejecting the post-apartheid condition while following *fallism*. The most important successes of the #feesmustfall movement at universities in South Africa were the proclamation of Free higher education by the government and the reopening of economic transformation dossier in the country, noticeable with countrywide debates as well as policy propositions amending previous *affirmative action* regulations.

## **7.7 Morphogenesis of social media discursive acts of everyday resistance**

The argument presented in this sequence of epochs recounts how social media discourse during #feesmustfall came to be. The sequence suggests that the post-apartheid era came with its flaws, allowing the colonisation of South Africa to perpetuate itself through time as “colonial unconscious”. Also, it allowed the non-white political and economic elite to indulge in corruption and unlawful enrichment. These vexatious facts caused the frustrated generation of coming to age *born-frees* to take up the lantern for the fight for freedom, calling the whole country to get back to seeking the achievement of the goals set in the *freedom charter*.

During the 3 epochs, mainstream discourse amongst non-whites transformed from a *discourse of repressed aspirations and struggle against apartheid*, to the post-apartheid *discourse of reconstruction and compromise* in the 1<sup>st</sup> epoch; then from a *discourse of reconstruction and compromise* to a *discourse of resistance to the financial and expert hegemon* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> epoch; and finally, From a *discourse of resistance to the financial and expert hegemon* to a *discourse of socio-economic transformation and globalisation* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> epoch (See Table 7.7).

**Table 7.6: Transformation of South African discourses leading to #feesmustfall social media discourse of resistance**

Epochs	1989 – 1997 1 <sup>st</sup> epoch	1998 – 2007 2 <sup>nd</sup> epoch	2008 – 2017 3 <sup>rd</sup> epoch
<b>Outcome of the spatiotemporal rhythmic of the emergence of the #feesmustfall discourse</b>	<p>The 1<sup>st</sup> epoch resulted at a systemic level, in <i>structural transformation</i> with the repeal of Apartheid laws and institutions, the creation of democratic institutions and the setting up of affirmative actions.</p> <p><u>Social system and social interaction</u>: compromise in containment and integration in solidarity  <u>Social/structural elaboration</u> : compromise  <u>Socio-cultural interaction</u> : unification  <u>Cultural elaboration</u> : syncretism</p>	<p>The 2<sup>nd</sup> epoch resulted in <i>cultural elaboration</i> as a significant outcome because the primary agency of the higher education studentship was forming a cultural posture of opposition and resistance to their hardship (<i>student qua black-child qua freedom fighter</i>).</p> <p><u>Social interaction</u> : containment  <u>Social/structural elaboration</u> : compromise  <u>Socio-cultural interaction</u> : unification  <u>Cultural elaboration</u>: syncretism</p>	<p>The 3<sup>rd</sup> epoch resulted in the emergence of #feesmustfall social media discourse as a first step to a <i>structural elaboration</i> in three main dimensions: identity, cultural and social in relation to the use of social media in communication during social movement.</p> <p><u>Social interaction</u>: containment  <u>Social/structural elaboration</u>: compromise and integration  <u>Socio-cultural interaction</u>: unification and cleavage  <u>Cultural elaboration</u>: syncretism and pluralism</p>
<b>Discourses</b>	From discourse of repressed aspirations and struggle against apartheid to a discourse of reconstruction, compromise and re-identification	From discourse of reconstruction, compromise and re-identification to a discourse of resistance to the financial and expert hegemon	From discourse of resistance to the financial and expert hegemon to a discourse of socio-economic transformation and globalisation
<b>Systemic outcome</b>	<b>Outcome of the 1<sup>st</sup> epoch: Structural elaboration</b>	<b>Outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> epoch: Cultural elaboration</b>	<b>Outcome of the 3<sup>rd</sup> epoch: Structural elaboration</b>

## 7.8 Why are South African community members using social media to enact online discursive resistance during social movements?

South African community members, who identified (implicitly for most) as *student qua black-child qua freedom fighters* used social media according to the tendencies of a *space of transformative negation* during #feesmustfall for these reasons:

- They experienced their appropriation of social media (Twitter™ in this case) as an empowering lever which affordances as well as western socio-cultural embeddedness and under-design were opportunistically aligning post-apartheid socio-cultural emergent properties with convergence culture and globalisation
- The use of the social media platform Twitter™ during #feesmustfall connected them in a network defining a space of transformative negation/absence where their individual acts of resistance as Twitter posts resonated with many others, legitimating their freedom fighters status, discrediting the legitimacy of the post-apartheid condition through the undermining of authority by exposing the logical contradictions of its discourses, the incompleteness of its

*affirmative actions*, the *incoherence* of many of its policies and the vicious infinite regress of whiteness rejecting any non-white socio-cultural influence.

- The transformative space of communication generated was allowing for the asignification of the legitimacy of higher education authorities and students identities *as black-child* and their re-signification as illegitimate authorities while the *student qua black-child* became a *freedom fighter*

It is understood that networked actors in their interactions produce a discourse of resistance following the momentum of their agential impetus and opportunities in socio-cultural emergent properties of relationship (Cammaerts, 2013).

## Chapter VIII: Discussion of findings

This research was deployed and argued according to Critical Realism ontological and epistemological assumptions. It applied the Morphogenetic/Morphostatic approach (M/M approach) as a realist social theory and as a causation framework (Through M/M cycles). It collected qualitative data and applied Critical Discourse Analysis in deriving empirical evidence of the phenomenon studied. The findings of this research consisted into explaining social media discourse as the product of an industrious process of transformation bound to time, space, socio-cultural and technological conditions.

This research explains the emergence of *South African students qua black-child qua freedom fighters'* discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance over social media during the #feesmustfall social movement. That discursive enactment generated a *space of transformative negation* from the sharing of experiences, legitimacy, identity, resources and aspirations which causal powers strategically guided the orientation of their messages for the achievement of their claims.

That explanation is encapsulated in the realist model of social media discursive action (ReMDA) (See Figure 8.1). The ReMDA explains social media discourse as a social practice of meaning production/reproduction and communication which is performed by social actors within the window of opportunity offered by socio-cultural emergent properties of relationships interacting with the social media technology at a particular spatiotemporal situation. As such, #feesmustfall social media discourse is emergent from the transformation of the post-apartheid discourse as it encounters convergence culture and globalisation with and through the technology of social media.

This discussion section engages the findings with regards to:

- Empirical and practical contribution: The social media discourse of #feesmustfall as a morphogenetic networked everyday resistance to the post-apartheid condition was generated by a spatiotemporal rhythmic of the interaction between local socio-cultural environments, convergence culture and globalisation, and social media technology. Also, #feesmustfall social media discourse is underpinned by a *space of transformative negation* shaping its performance and explaining the *leaderlessness* structure of the movement; while involvement is explained by critical agential impetus
- Theoretical contribution: the theoretical and practical contributions to the computer-mediated discourse (CMD) and information systems (IS) fields of research, emphasising their place within the body of knowledge of CMD and IS; as well as their value to practitioners;
- The methodological contribution: the methodology applied CMDA in producing the findings and the limitations within which they are valid and trustworthy.

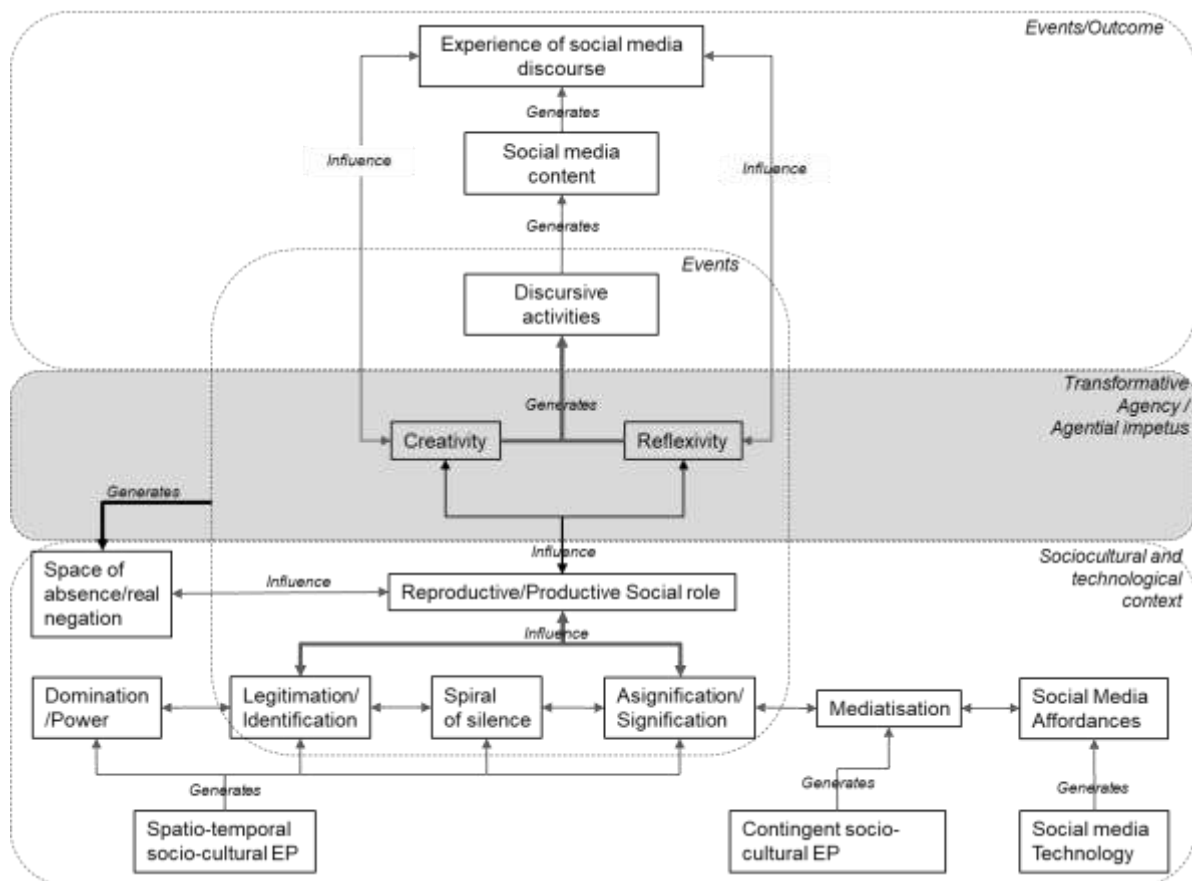


Figure 8.1: The realist model of social media discursive action - ReMDA<sup>22</sup>

## 8.1 Empirical contribution: The social media discourse of #feesmustfall

The research found that #feesmustfall social media authors deployed a discourse of resistance made up of the discourses of *the struggle for Free and decolonised education*, the *black-child qua freedom fighter* identity, and the *oppression of the black-child*. #feesmustfall social media discourse was found to be:

- an act of networked everyday resistance to the post-apartheid condition
- to be produced from a *space of transformative negation*
- emergent as the result of spatiotemporal rhythmic in the trajectory of the *agential impetus* of South Africans, influenced by post-apartheid socio-cultural emergent properties of relationship, convergence culture and globalisation, and technology affordances since 1994.

### 8.1.1 Networked everyday resistance to post-apartheid generating a space of transformative negation

This section suggests that the research resonated with existing literature on the understanding of new social movements but differed by highlighting the existence and influence of a *space of transformative*

<sup>22</sup> NB: This figure of the ReMDA is repeated here to assist the reader with the presentation of the discussion of findings

*negation* resulting from networked everyday resistance social media discursive actions. As a recommendation, it is suggested that democratic systems are better at engaging with spaces of autonomous resistance with a better ability to deter violent conflict through communication framing.

The understanding of #feesmustfall discourses as networked everyday resistance to the post-apartheid condition in the era of the Internet and occupy movements allows to slightly push forward James Scott's (James C. Scott, 1985, 1989) idea of everyday resistance (See section 3.3.4). This research suggests that the Internet and social media knitted individual acts of resistance into a network of everyday resistance. It suggests that while retaining an individualistic character, because of the Internet and social media, acts of everyday resistance were networked and resulted in a leaderless movement as suggested in the networked resistance literature (Boyd, 2010; Roberts, 2016; Tai, 2015; Yang & Jiang, 2015). As such, suddenly, all the unsatisfied of the system find one another and in a synchronised move stage a networked action comparable to a distributed denial of service (DDoS) assault from The Anonymous (Goode, 2015) or a Black Twitter transformative engagement with a social topic (Clarck, 2015; Hill, 2018). This finding is supported by Castells (2011, 2015) and Touraine (1985) thesis on new social movements (See section 3.4.5). The research also agrees with Castells and Touraine that new social movements are not aiming at regime change but at the resolution of pressing social matters. Johansson and Vinthagen (2016) argue that new social movements benefit from the leniency of democratic systems where they can thrive.

As the CDA of Twitter posts has suggested that authors of tweets were hard at work undermining the legitimacy of authorities. Their actions were framed by a legitimate spatiotemporal trajectory which they shared with authorities: the struggle against apartheid and the struggle for the achievement of freedom as suggested in the Freedom Charter (See section 6.5). Also, South Africa's commitment to democracy meant allowing people to express their frustration of post-apartheid conditions to enable a move towards an acceptable response to the oppositional language. Evidence of that is in the respect for democratic institutions bestowed in the Twitter posts while the legitimacy of office bearers was undermined; also, as suggested by all the respondents, Fallism extremist views were a deterrent to identify with it. There was always that hesitation: the general agreement was that Fallism was fighting the 'good fight' but was ideologically wrong.

Elsewhere, under authoritarian rule, due to the ruthlessness of authorities, there is very little space for genuine expression of social challenges and frustration, hence social matters become secondary and political dissent becomes the primary, since the only way to engage in social transformation needs political transformation. The Arab Springs (L. Anderson, 2011; Aouragh, 2012; Arafa & Armstrong, 2015) such were examples where regimes had to fall or be destroyed by revolutions or some international community interventions, in the face of some broadcasted unacceptable atrocities.

This is where commonalities with relevant extant theories end. This research suggests that a *space of transformative negation* was contingently generated over time from the online interactions of community members and was promoting leaderlessness and structuring the performance of #feesmustfall discourse on social media with narratives, ideological background and objectives as would have suggested networked resistance literature (Gray, 2013; Roberts, 2016; Rocheleau, 2015;

Tai, 2015; Yang & Jiang, 2015). Bhaskar (2008b) alludes to the possibility of the existence of such a space as an area within space and time where real negation is deployed.

Black Twitter (See 3.7.6 Black Twitter) is an instance of an emergent space of transformative negation: a space of negation. As a matter of facts, Black Twitter is used by African American as well as South African community members to encourage and display an open and critical discussion regarding black experience and aspirations; grounding a collective identity, a legitimacy of claims, (Clarck, 2015; Graham & Smith, 2016; Masemola, 2015). This suggests that *spaces of autonomous resistance* do exist and affect their visitors' discursive practices.

This is to suggest that democratic systems have a better engagement with spaces of autonomous resistance, deterring community members from primarily targeting political change. Democratic regimes are better equipped by engaging with the definition of social and political frame of communication less prone to violent conflict and incline to de-escalate threats of potential regime change.

### **8.1.2 #feesmustfall space of transformative negation to explain movement leaderlessness**

The research claims that networked acts of resistance as #feesmustfall social media discourse generated a *space of transformative negation*, a space where the weakness of the *student qua black-child* is asigned, rendered meaningless, then signified into the strength of the *freedom fighter*, using the precarity of their condition as a legitimating factor justifying their actions. The actions and the cause of the student qua black-child qua freedom fighter then became just and rightful. That process of identification by creating an oppositional identity to the hegemon is well known in social science as have suggested Haslam and Reicher (2012) with the Social Identity Model of Resistance Dynamics (SIMRD) (See sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3).

The difference here is that the use of social media has made it possible to gather the crowd or has turned, through social networking stitching, online individual actions into a collective action. Such a collective action has proven leaderless or without a leading figure. This is in contradiction with Haslam and Reicher (2012) SIMRD which requires a skilled leading figure for success.

In this research, the *space of transformative negation* as an emergent property of relationship is responsible for the direction followed by the core actions of individuals. This conceptualisation resonates with Gerbaudo (2018, p5) idea of a "*choreography of assembly* as a process of symbolic construction of public space which facilitates and guides the physical *assembling* of a highly dispersed and individualised constituency", while differing from horizontal or distributed leadership upheld by some authors like Harris & DeFlaminis (2016), Oborn, Barrett, & Dawson (2013) and Tian, Risku, and Collin (2016). This is to suggest that the spontaneity and the observed leaderlessness of new social movement is caused by a specific socio-cultural frame providing an acceptable worldview for those abiding by it.

### 8.1.3 Emergence of the #feesmustfall social media discourse as a product of spatiotemporal rhythmic

The application of the M/M cycle (Archer, 1995) depicts a process of discourse transformation and the growing special influence of digital technology on its performance. The use of the M/M cycle as an explanatory framework of emergence allowed to suggest that the #feesmustfall social media discourse was emergent, generated by the spatiotemporal rhythmic of South African discursive forms. The spatiotemporal rhythmic examined suggests that:

- Every 8 to 10 years there have been transformations of the South African society which would take that time to build momentum to challenge the “*vexatious fact*” of the post-apartheid condition
- That transformation is better grasped as a *spatiotemporal rhythmic* between interacting, but different and sometimes antagonistic agencies (local or international), and between interacting corporate and primary agencies, and between such agencies engaging the post-apartheid condition and the available communication technology

The M/M cycle allowed presenting #feesmustfall social media discourse as an emergent practice of networked everyday resistance. It highlighted the fact that #feesmustfall discourse resulted from transformation, epoch after epoch, following a spatiotemporal rhythmic, from a *discourse of repressed aspirations and struggle against apartheid*, to a *discourse of reconstruction, compromise and re-identification*, to a *discourse of resistance to the financial and expert hegemon*, to the *social media discourse of #feesmustfall* (See Table 8.7 in section 7.7 for a summary).

The hope generated by freedom fighter was seriously challenged by the slow pace of transformation in the country. Most of the population which is non-white was still confronted with similar challenges as during apartheid. But authorities’ commitment to the rainbow nation narrative and the born free marginalised their resentment and frustration exploding in outrage in increasingly common service delivery protests (Langa et al., 2017; Von Holdt et al., 2011).

The narratives of the *Rainbow nation* and *born-frees* were instrumental in the emergence of a new South African identity claiming *the born-frees*, non-whites who dare to behave like whites, while reinforcing ethnic identities (Reddy, 2018). The identity of the *fallist black-child* transfigured into a *freedom fighter* to achieve better life prospects by rejecting the post-apartheid condition is an underpinning reality amongst non-white South Africans (Langa et al., 2017; Lester et al., 2017; Von Holdt et al., 2011; wa Bofelo, 2017). The country has entered a time of restructuration, with the acceleration of economic transformation policies including the land reform and the amendment of previous *affirmative action* regulations.

Such observations and potential predictions stem from M/M cycle causation which sees social phenomena as a flow within space and time, driven by the causal inertia or spatiotemporal rhythmic of the internal and necessary relation of the natural and objective material properties of its components bound to perpetually produce or reproduce themselves at not always regular intervals in time and the same geographical location (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 1978, 1998, 1998, 2008a, 2015).

## 8.2 Theoretical contribution: Realist model of social media discursive action (ReMDA)

The ReMDA is an explanatory model allowing to describe and explain the emergence of social media discursive practices. It is a theoretical contribution based on the M/M approach as a realist social theory and its M/M cycle as an explanatory framework of emergence. The ReMDA constitutes a product of middle-range theorising (Laughlin, 1995; Merton, 1957; Weber, 2012). It is presented as a nomothetic model constituted by constructs interrelated according to propositions theoretically generated with reference to its critical realist underpinning (See sections 6.8 and 6.9) following a causal rhythmic mapped with the M/M approach. As a product of middle-range theorisation around online discursive practices with an emancipatory inclination, the ReMDA engages the philosophy of Critical Realism, engages with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), contributes to Information Systems (IS), Computer-Mediated Discourse (CMD) and e-Participation fields of research, and to the M/M approach. The ReMDA holds that discourse is emergent, intentional, and a creative process.

### 8.2.1 ReMDA, CMD and Critical Realism (CR)

The ReMDA model suggests that social media discourse as practice is the result of the interaction between *transformative agency* and their contextual conditional socio-cultural and technological emergent properties of relationships. Observable outcomes of these interactions are performance through relatively autonomously reflexive creative deployment of *legitimate and identity bound assigned/signified* content over social media, *and experience of conveyed meaning through the interpretation of signs availed as social media content*.

#### ReMDA and CMD: aligning with the relational communication paradigm

It is important to emphasize that this inquiry was not a linguistic research, but rather a critical realist research more interested in the transformation of the practice of discourse over social media. That practice resulted from actors' actions mediating the strategic influences of emergent properties of relationships and ICTs. Computer-mediated discourse (CMD), like computer-mediated communication (CMC), was developed at a time when interpersonal online interactions were mostly textual with theoretical contributions suggesting that it was lacking emotionally and informationally (cues-filtered-out approach), in comparison to face-face communication. Its relational character was already a marker of its emotional richness with the social information processing (SIP) theory aiming at explaining that over time CMC can lead users to develop relational communication (Herring & Androutopoulos, 2015; Walther, 1996, 2018; Walther, Van der Heide, Ramirez Jr, Burgoon, & Peña, 2015). With the dramatic increase in bandwidth and computing power noticeable post year 2000, CMC and CMD theories have had to accommodate the multimodal communication landscape which the Internet has brought, paradigmatically shifting into relational communication furthermore than ever: Herring & Androutopoulos (2015) speak about CMD 2.0 in that regard. In short, the whole field of CMD is in the relational communication paradigm<sup>23</sup> now. The ReMDA aligns with that trend.

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<sup>23</sup> *Paradigm in this section refers to Thomas Kuhn scientific paradigms* (Kuhn, 1996)

The ReMDA is *de facto* relational due to its Critical Realist, M/M approach and social media focus (Archer, 2010a). It examines social media discourse as a creative and rational deployment of combinations of narratives, genres and registers navigating contextual emergent properties of relationships and technological affordances as would have underlined Archer (2010b) insisting on the power of creativity in reflexivity.

The ReMDA is an approach suggesting that CMD is an emergent kind performed in a communication space enjoying a relative autonomy and an ability to influence meaning both through the affordances and socio-cultural embeddedness and other under-design patterns of the Twitter™ platform. The ReMDA suggests that the technology adds its voice to the message of an author, giving it some unintended twists, with a greater ability to manipulate the meaning in the content being exchanged (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Hepp et al., 2015; Hjarvard, 2008).

The ReMDA is a Computer-Mediated discourse model which suggests to examine CMD phenomena in a holistic manner, from all the usual defining viewpoints including at least the network medium, IT artefact medium variables and discursive modes; with an emphasis on its sociological nature, especially its realist sociological nature and its emancipatory axiology (Hepp et al., 2015; Hjarvard, 2008; Jansson, 2013).

#### ReMDA and Critical Realism: transformative negation, emancipation and dialectical underlabouring:

Further, the inferential resolution of the ReMDA requires the use of a *theory of transformative negation* suggested by Bhaskar (2008b) or *an assemblage theory* as suggested by DeLanda (2016) or a theory of *asignifying semiotics* (Beck, 2016; DeLanda, 2012; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Genosko, 2008, 2014; Rainbird, 2001) to translate discursive change into the summoning of the “assemblage” or “multiple” character of entities and objects of meaning. Such summoning allows rupturing signification lines or re-orienting the signification of reality into a more amenable environment.

Computer-mediated discursive action as suggested by the ReMDA is dialectical, within a continuum of actions aiming at emancipating their authors. It proceeds by transformative negation of the present state of affairs through asignification/signification performed by a creative transformative agency influenced by post-apartheid mechanisms of power/domination enforcing a spiral of silence upon the public opinion, and the mediatization of the technological platform carrying embedded and under-designed (as well as other under-design requirements) western socio-cultural emergent properties of relationships, while presenting western values as standard in the information shared. As such, the ReMDA attempts to emancipate both the researcher and the author of an online utterances from the shackles of socio-cultural signification and fulfils CR emancipatory axiology (Bhaskar, 1989; Mabasa, 2017).

The ReMDA also benefits from the ‘*dialectical underlabouring*’ of Critical Realism as it brings together various theoretical contributions from positivist and interpretivist thoughts to only retain concepts with greater explanatory powers able to provide ontologically oriented answers to CMD questions regarding the use of social media in discourse (Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 1998; Rainbird, 2001).

### **8.2.2 ReMDA, everyday resistance, networked everyday resistance and space of transformative negation**

The innovation of the ReMDA is the introduction of asignification as a structural opportunity to creativity due to the inherent indeterminacy of relational emergent properties. The ReMDA conceptualises social media communication as inherently discursive and dialectical. It holds that social media *acts of networked everyday resistance* generate *spaces of autonomous resistance*.

The notion of *networked everyday resistance* suggests that authors of social media messages act in their personal capacity, responding to the issues at hand with the resources at their disposal, exploiting their networks to amplify the reach and intensity of their individual actions against the hegemon. That idea concurs with Castells (2015) allusion to a culture of autonomy: as everyday resistance is individual, autonomous; but as part of a network of individual everyday resisters, it is networked everyday resistance. It denotes a normalised sense or culture of autonomous resistance.

The idea of a *space of autonomous resistance* aligns with Deleuze & Guattari (1987) ideas of rhizomatic spaces as multiplicities or assemblages (DeLanda, 2016) to suggest *spaces of autonomous resistance* in the sense that they are 'smooth' and asignified or resisting signification; Signification being synonymous to hegemonic imposition of meaning and direction. A *space of autonomous resistance* is a space of transformative negation; but the contrary is not always true since there are other types of transformative negations including radical negation, linear negation and their relevant opposites as suggests Bhaskar theorem of negation<sup>24</sup> (Bhaskar, 2008b).

#feesmustfall actors were networked through their use of the social media platform Twitter™. They were able to access through networked interactions a communication space where their perception of the legitimacy of their individual frustration, their desire for transformation, and their freedom fighting actions were shared. That *space of transformative negation* allowed to generate a discourse of resistance following the momentum of their *critical agential impetus* and the opportunities availed in local socio-cultural and technological emergent properties of relationship constituting their environment as a measure of their willingness to be involved in the collective action (Cammaerts, 2013).

### **8.2.3 M/M approach and the possibility of Technological Emergent Properties (TEP)**

The M/M approach as a realist social theory is not a socio-technical theory but can be brought to use when looking at the phenomenon of technology use. In that effect, the ReMDA also aligns with social perception and the causal powers of the *IT artefact* through its affordances and its social embeddedness and under-design as a medium in Mediatization, generating misfits and workarounds (innovation) when interacting with a context different from where and when it was made (C. Anderson & Robey, 2017; DeSanctis & Poole, 1994; Majchezak, Faraj, Kane, & Azad Bijan, 2013; Ononiwu, 2015; Treem & Leonardi, 2012; Volkoff & Strong, 2013).

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<sup>24</sup> Real negation ≥ transformative negation ≥ radical negation ≥ linear negation (Bhaskar, 2008b, p. 414).

However, the IT artefact is seen as an assemblage or a *multiplicity* that constantly offers the possibility to start afresh or to rupture away from the traditional when being integrated as a symbolic element in systems of meaning (culture) and a resource in systems of power (social) (DeLanda, 2012). Mingers and Willcocks (2014) considering a material world of physical structures and technology, along with Scott and Orlikowski (2013), Leonardi (2013) and Niemimaa (Niemimaa, 2016) joining the social and the material in sociomateriality; and DeLanda (2015, 2016), Lemke (2015) or Müller (2015) new materialism in resolving the growing notice of the pervasive influence of things in society. Such arguments suggest the need for extending the M/M approach with a socio-technical dimension; carried by a concept of Technological Emergent Properties (TEP) of relationship as a special kind beyond technology affordances and directly derived from the interaction with and between technological artefacts. This is compelling in this era of the pervasive computing, Internet of things, Nano-technology and Artificial Intelligence. These 4 phenomena represent cases where objects are social Actors and could be analysed by M/M approach and cycles by theorising a material spatiotemporal rhythmic and creativity (autopoiesis) without analytical reflexivity.

### **8.3 Methodological contribution: ReMDA and CMDA**

This research has considered one platform specialising in microblogging and news out of hundreds, one sub-Saharan African country and one social movement in the South African #eesmustfall, to investigate how the use of social media, understood as the discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance, was emerging.

The methodology deployed in the research was a qualitative single case research based on a conceptual framework. The case research data (social media data principally) was analysed using CDA by Fairclough (2012) as an approach to Computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) (Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015; Honeycutt & Herring, 2009) for the empirical phase of the research and then using the M/M cycle for the transcendental phase of the research. The social media data collected constituted an archive of 51 258 twitter posts deploying #eesmustfall discourse. Due to the large number of posts to consider in projects, their multimodality (hyper textuality and various types of media including text, images, video and audio) and their global reach, the analysis of social media posts is rather new and scarce (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005; Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015; Lomborg, 2014; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Most authors have preferred to use quantitative technics in determining probabilistic impacts and perceptions in interpersonal and intergroup communication (Walther, 2018; Walther et al., 2015), “social media sentiment” as well as “networks size, structure and dynamics” using mathematical models (Barker et al., 2000; Walther, 2018)

There were some variations from the usual CMDA including:

- doing CDA on Twitter posts: The strategy adopted was to use the set of Twitter posts collected as a unique text even though it was written by multiple authors (a decalcomania of narratives). That was done because the use of keywords was providing a paradigmatic unity to the body of text while syntagmatic arrangements of these paradigms indicated articulation,

allowing to consider the whole set of posts as a unique text with a few important messages. Rambe (2012) used a similar approach to CDA in analysing Facebook posts.

- the method deployed in this research allowed to quickly access main narratives and draw out the social impact of the social media technology as both a reinforcement of colonial and enforcement of liberal values into African values as a way away from the post-apartheid socio-cultural hegemonies. That was done by focusing on the semiotic part of the linguistic analysis and using M/M approach in analysing relations of power/domination challenged or followed by authors (Rambe, 2012).
- The ReMDA analysis of discourse also has a systematic functional linguistic (SFL) (Halliday & Webster, 2009) underpinning, though it is more concerned with registers as topical area of discussions (paradigms) and genres as an arrangement of registers (syntagmatic) in the deployment and consumption of meaning delivered as a *decalcomania of narratives*.
- Intertextual/hypertextual (Dunmire, 2009; Fairclough, 2003, 2012) analysis was implemented drawing mainly from a set of documents and mainstream narratives including the Freedom Charter, the Constitution of RSA, legislations and policy documents on higher education and welfare and development programs; in addition to Black consciousness, the Rainbow Nation and the born-frees narratives. These documents and narratives were appropriated and transformed by users into deploying the discourse of resistance they wanted; while enjoying the empowerment of their ease of use and their contingent detachment from the challenges of African and post-apartheid socio-cultural conditioning.

## Chapter IX: Conclusion

This research has been a transdisciplinary endeavour of the contribution of the social media platform Twitter™ to the discourse availed online by South African users during #feesmustfall social movement as a social practice representing an instance of the phenomenon of computer-mediated discourse.

The research has answered the main research question: *Why are South African community members using social media to enact online discursive resistance during social movements?*

### 9.1 The findings

The findings of the research suggest that South African community members authored 3 main discourses of resistance on Twitter™: #feesmustfall discourses of *the identity of the black-child, the oppression of the black-child and the black-child's struggle for free and decolonised education*. They identified as “*student qua black-child*” stepping into the “*Freedom fighter*” role against the hegemonic post-apartheid condition curtailing their aspirations. It was found that social media *socio-cultural embedding and under-design* (Western European socio-cultural globalising underpinning features and functional features of the platforms) which interaction with the local socio-cultural mix (Post-apartheid social structures and local cultures tendencies for domination/power, spiral of silence, and legitimacy/identification) resulted in *misfits and workarounds* enhancing individual emotional conflict and lining towards a *socio-cultural opportunistic contingent complementarity* integration in the deployment of discourse. That integration was actualised as a *mediatization* emergent property through *asignification/signification* of mainstream discourses of liberal democracy, colonial capitalism, national democratic revolution, free and decolonised education and Fallism. That *mediatization* through re-signification of the struggle for freedom created a communication “*space of transformative negation*” where freedom fighters enact discursive everyday resistance against the hegemonic forces of precariousness.

### 9.2 The contributions

This research contributes to theory, practice and methodology.

#### 9.2.1 Contribution to theory

The theoretical contribution includes a *realist model of social media discursive action* (ReMDA) which provides a critical realist explanation of the dialectical deployment of discourse; and a morphogenetic sequence of the spatiotemporal transformation of the discursive practice of the South African students *qua black-child qua freedom fighter* (See sections 6.9 and 7.6)

The theoretical contribution of the research includes a morphogenetic sequence of SSA discursive action and a realist model of social media discursive action; explaining South African community members deployment of discourse over social media during social movement and telling the tale of the transformation of discursive practices with the advent of social media in SSA.

#### 9.2.2 Contribution to practice

The contribution to practice which this research brings to the fore is a depiction of social change as it is expressed in the social media discourse projected by sub-Saharan community members, allowing

social activist to understand and the resources and dedication of those interested or to be interested into demonstration and social movement participation. Also, it allows governments to see the tide and avoid needless bloodshed.

A reference to practitioners for the development of guidelines, regulatory environment and infrastructure to engage and connect with community members' social media discourse.

### **9.2.3 Contribution to methodology**

In terms of methodology, the research realised critical discourse analysis on Twitter™ post following a systematic and replicable process of linguistic and intertextual analysis. The body of Twitter post collected was engaged with as a unique text. The linguistic analysis focused on semiotic content by examining the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations within the text as they hinted at relations of power/domination in post-apartheid South Africa. Further, the methodology suggested interrogating the transformation of discourse over time by means of the M/M cycle, allowing to observe within South Africa as technology was progressively penetrating society, with an interest on the impact of the IT artefact.

## **9.3 Challenges to social media discursive action**

Social media discursive actions understood as enactment of networked everyday resistance face strong challenges with the identification of authors as human beings and seem to be bound to change as the social media technology evolves. In our days, social media is supported by tremendously capable Artificial Intelligences (AI) enabled by advances in hardware and software capabilities (computational power, Internet of Things (IoT), storage facilities and sophisticated allorhythmia) enabling deep learning, machine learning, and machine vision. In short, there is a worry that social media communication through an AI whether friendly or not might present unusual challenges to social media authors ability to emancipation through electronic means.

Also, growing government, corporates and other users' infringement in users' privacy, Information wars, and compulsory media education making use of digital deceit means such as fake news, precision propaganda, *deep-fake*, false-flag and *ransomware* are a concern for freedom of speech, democracy and other liberties.

## **9.4 Recommendations for further studies**

The aim of this research was to develop a realist theoretical contribution explaining the phenomenon termed as "*social media discursive enactment of networked everyday resistance*", which was achieved with the ReMDA. Further studies should examine the applicability of the ReMDA to other contexts around the world as well as in virtual domains, engage AI and other societal actors with ReMDA, the challenges of digital deceit, online warfare and terrorism; as communities of human beings struggle for a better life in this dawn of pervasive and intelligent computing.

## Chapter X: Reference list and Appendices

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## 10.2 Appendices

### A1- Appendix: Most popular tweets of #feesmustfall in 2015 and 2016

Table A1: Most popular tweets of #feesmustfall in 2015 and 2016

Rank	Most retweeted post 2015	Most retweeted post 2016
1	I'm tearing up. The white human shield. This is both incredibly beautiful and incredibly sad. #FeesMustFall [1800 - @ThabileMpe – social activist – Feminist – 20/10/2015]	A police man saying to another. "I want to resign. How can they make us fight with children." #FeesMustFall2016 #UP #sabcnews [1943 - @Emeliamotsai – journalist SABC- 11/10/2016 ] <a href="https://mamaponyamotsai.wordpress.com/">https://mamaponyamotsai.wordpress.com/</a>
2	More 5 cops on 1 woman!? We've lost our humanity. The struggle is real in South Africa! #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CR1y3KyXIAEvkBN.jpg">https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CR1y3KyXIAEvkBN.jpg</a> [1425 - @UlrichJvV – Humanitarian anthropologist – 21/10/2015]	Calling progressive lawyers willing to assist with #FeesMustFall matters in all affected university towns. Volunteers pls contact me urgently [1340 - @AdvDali_Mpofu – EFF - 16/10/2016]
3	They're skinning us alive. #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/7BSbTQ7ZYQ">https://t.co/7BSbTQ7ZYQ</a> (this is a pic) [1323 - @AndreiDamane – student – 21/10/2015]	A student has been shot. Now protestors are chasing police away. WARNING: Graphic visuals. #UKZN [1109 - @DasenThathiah – tv reporter eNCA– 22/09/2016]
4	[Please RT] Join the revolution tomorrow 🙏🙏🙏🙏 Pretoria/ Durban/ London #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/...">https://t.co/...</a> (call to go to the union building) [1318 - @Kay_Angel – Student activist – 22/10/2015]	There has been more than 600 arrests of #FeesMustFall activists. Let me tell u: u can arrest all of them, but u'll never arrest their ideas! [935 - @MbuyiseniNdlozi – EFF – +19/10/2016]
5	Remember when they said our generation is lost and lazy? #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/Zt41cqVn6U">https://t.co/Zt41cqVn6U</a> (pic of protesting students) [1243 - @Zack_Khambule – Cape town student – 21/10/2015]	Moving Picture of #FatherGrahamPugin of Holy Trinity Church protecting #Wits students who sought shelter in his church. SAPS later shot him! [881 - @MbuyiseniNdlozi – EFF – 11/10/2016]
6	This is why we march!!! Education has the POWER to transform South Africa. #FeesMustFall #UnionBuilding <a href="https://t.co/mSdFbtHh...">https://t.co/mSdFbtHh...</a> [1157 - @Lean3JvV – social entrepreneur – 23/10/2015]	South Africa DOES NOT have money problems, it has MONEY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS! #FeesMustFall #unionbuilding [821 - @JustZweli – 23/10/2015]
7	This is what happened at #UWC. Students did not provoke the police. Video by @News24 #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/...">https://t.co/...</a> [1130 - @DamianHein – student activist – 22/10/2015]	BBC tried to interview students at Rahima Moosa Hospital on graduateing late because of #FeesMustFall. [897 - @Mellz_N – Med school student- 26/10/2016]
8	If only the @SAPoliceService were as swift with criminals as they are with our students at the moment #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall [1052 - @moflavadj – TV and Radio personality – 21/10/2015]	"The decolonized national anthem."    #Wits #Fees2017 #FeesMustFall [823 - @LindokuhlXulu1 – eNCA Journalist - 7/10/2016]
9	Shot at for wanting education. This is what it's come down too 🙏 #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/vpdsaoQwul">https://t.co/vpdsaoQwul</a> [984 - @MapsMaponyane – TV personality – 21/10/2015]	Our country is a mess! #FeesMustFall #PravinGordhan #SABC #SpyTapes #WaterShedding Rand weakening Our President rn: ht... [745 – @Karabo_Mokgoko - 12//10/2016]
10	#FeesMustFall Students against tuition hikes in Cape Town met w/ police tear gas, rubber bullets. #NationalShutDown [937 - @syndicalisms – Student activist – 21/10/2015]	What sort of government does this to students? The government @MYANC is a murderous government #FeesMustFall [725 - @Lazola_Ndamase – SACP -20/10/2016]
11	Let's be frank guys. If there's money to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games, there's money to fund students. #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown [902 - @AndreiDamane – Student activist – 21/10/2015]	If you arrested during the protests, these are your rights. #FeesMustFall2016 [716 - @Raees_Noorbhai – 22/09/2016]

Rank	Most retweeted post 2015	Most retweeted post 2016
12	As they pray, a human shield stands in front @LiveVIPZA #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown #unionbuilding <a href="https://t.co/hy9pvQYE...">https://t.co/hy9pvQYE...</a> (pic of protected praying Muslim students) [790 - @ahikeiru (login changed to @AbigailJavier_) – Citizen journalist – 23/10/2015]	MISSING PERSON: Minister Blade Nzimande has gone missing RT to help locate his whereabouts #FeesMustFall <a href="http://t.co/10...">http://t.co/10...</a> [708 - @AbortedNews – satire – 19/10/2015]
13	My younger brother gets it 😊❤️😂 if we can't finish, they won't be able to start! #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.c...">https://t.c...</a> (pic of a high school kid stating not to be able to start at University if his sister doesn't finish) [781 - @ForeverPhii (now @TheRealMsParty) student]	#MustRead advice for #FeesMustFall unarmed students who need to document widespread #PoliceBrutality in #SouthAfrica #VideoAsEvidence #FMF [678 - @Adamitv – NGO for social justice – 25/10/2016]  WITNESSVerified account @witnessorg WITNESS trains & supports people using #video in their fight for #humanrights, exposing the truth, one video at a time. Sign up for news: <a href="http://bit.ly/1Uj6f3">http://bit.ly/1Uj6f3</a>
14	EVERYONE GOING TO A MARCH TOMORROW PLEASE READ, RT, and REPOST THIS!! #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/MBogZWX...">https://t.co/MBogZWX...</a> [772 - @MissNonhle – Student – broadcasting lawyers advice for protesting students – 22/10/2015]	Father has been shot by the police #Wits #Fees2017 #FeesMustFall2016 <a href="https://t.co/Z8xymCx8Qa">https://t.co/Z8xymCx8Qa</a> [666 - @Tiro_1632 – eNCA – 10/10/2016] → tweet receive wide interest from international media houses
15	Any students in Cape Town needing legal support contact @EElawcentre #NationalShutDown @NdifunaUkwazi #FeesMustFall [764 - @ZackieAchmat – social activist at Ndifuna Ukwazi NGO– 21/10/2015]	South African cdes in New York City plan to stand with us this week 🙏we see you, we thank you. #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/IH...">https://t.co/IH...</a> [633 - @WitsSRC – 17/10/2016]
16	South Africa DOES NOT have money problems, it has MONEY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS! #FeesMustFall #unionbuilding [751 - @JustZweli – Business man - 23/10/2015]	Chaos breaking out at UCT @GroundUp_News #UCT #Fees2017 <a href="https://t.co/V1GxCV64Sv">https://t.co/V1GxCV64Sv</a> [620 - @ashleighfurlong – Journalist @GroundUp_News (NGO in social justice) - 18/10/2016]
17	The revolution will be tweeted! 🙏 #UnionBuilding #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown #BooksNotBullets <a href="https://t.co/p7uADR32VT">https://t.co/p7uADR32VT</a> [727 - @Lean3JvV – tweeted a Zapiro cartoon of the same title – 23/10/2015]	Since October 2015 university students in South Africa have campaigned against high tuition fees #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/...">https://t.co/...</a> [481 - @AJEnglish – 11/10/2016]
18	Goose bumps... #NationalShutDown to #WorldWideShutDown... Thank you Oxford, Harvard, NYU, etc ! #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co...">https://t.co...</a> [656 - @pookiportia – SA citizen alumny at a UK university – 22/10/2015]	#FreeAmla #FeesMustFall Hands off our future leaders hands off. RT until someone helps Alma. <a href="https://t.co/OGuFjCei9o">https://t.co/OGuFjCei9o</a> [479 - @Forchline - Village boy in pursuit of Happiness. @VIP  Revolutionary – 16/10/2016]
19	We have your back South Africa! #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall @RhodesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/uBLb3WblaV">https://t.co/uBLb3WblaV</a> [633 - @BlakeDontCrack – American social activist – 22/10/2015]	@MYANC #ANC With every rubber bullet or #SAPS brutality you & #DA are loosing 1000's of votes #2019 #FeesMustFall #FMF #TheRealWitsStory [478 - @Adamitv – Social Justice NGO – 22/10/2016]
20	Let us appreciate some leaders who made #FeesMustFall movement possible. Dedicated to non-violence #unionbuilding <a href="https://...">https://...</a> (with a pic of Wits students march) [627 - @ReadaBookSA – NGO in education activism]	The only thing that's changed is the quality of the images. #FeesMustFall2016 #FeesMarch #FeesMusFall <a href="https://t.co/6hP5m5...">https://t.co/6hP5m5...</a> [476 - @Kgosi_Azania - Flexible Sexual Poetic Intellectual   God   Black Conscious(ness)   Pan African  Revolutionary - 20/10/2016]
21	Call me paranoid, but if government wants to discredit #FeesMustFall, all it has to do is plant violent "students" at #unionbuilding march. [606 - @TomEatonSA – Best-selling novelist, columnist and screen writer – 23/10/2015]	We mourn the loss of Cde Benjamin Lesedi Phehla an outgoing SRC member at TUT sosha campus. #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/8V1ahQe...">https://t.co/8V1ahQe...</a> [450 - @WitsSRC – Student organisation – 21/10/2016]

Rank	Most retweeted post 2015	Most retweeted post 2016
22	They can shoot me, pepper spray me or arrest me! But I'm marching to #UnionBuilding in South Africa! ☹️ #FeesMustFall https://... [585 - @UlrichJvV – activist at the Union Building gathering – 23/10/2015]	Told you they are using live ammunition. #UKZN #Westville <a href="https://t.co/XLAFbkdEU">https://t.co/XLAFbkdEU</a> [386 - @NeZz_Gamede – student- tweet was challenged – 13/10/2017]
23	: Chaos! Teargas at #UnionBuilding. ANC & opportunistic politicians lighting fires, #FeesMustFall is NOT about you! https://t... [499 - @UlrichJvV – Social activist - 23/10/2015]	The #HRF & #SJM demand the immediate release of all students who are part of #FeesMustFall #FreeEducation #Police action lead... [376 - @Adamitv – Social Justice NGO – 16/10/2017]
24	THIS IS HOW THE #FeesMustFall. #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/iQpX0UJXJH">https://t.co/iQpX0UJXJH</a> (Short vid of a minister falling) [490 - @JesraelJacobs – Student – 21/10/2015]	South Africans living in the US are marching to the SA embassy tomorrow in solidarity with #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/F2Nds...">https://t.co/F2Nds...</a> [364 - @simamkeleD – Wits student and social activist - 18/10/2016]
25	Revolutions occur because the old are choked by protocol while youth breathe truth #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown [489 - @timothymaurice – Author – 21/10/2015]	If you don't understand this by now #FeesMustFall ... <a href="https://t.co/vMrclorewQ">https://t.co/vMrclorewQ</a> [368 - @InsaneCreature - student – 12/10/2016]
26	Stellenbosch earlier today. Nice neh? #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/F5AY1BSSNW">https://t.co/F5AY1BSSNW</a> (Pic of gathered protesting students) [436 - @ShakaSisulu – media personality – 21/10/2015]	Cry beloved Africa, cry. Students are being shot in the eyes but management and the state are silent. #FeesMustFall [359 - @WitsSRC – Wits student organisation – 10/10/2016]
27	SABC media has been asked to leave. Crowd chants "why you always lying?" #uctshutdown #feesmustfall #NationalShutDown https://... [431 - @zeekabane – Cape Town student – 22/10/2015]	Vuyani talking to media after court #MceboDlamini #fees2017 [348 - @RumanaAkoob – Journalist at the daily vox – 18/10/2016]
28	Black men from Cal got you South Africa. Let the bells of freedom ring! #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/qF...">https://t.co/qF...</a> [430 - @BlakeDontCrack – American social activist – 22/10/2015]	#UKZN Students face down in the residence being questioned <a href="https://t.co/0dNOiMJ0Zo">https://t.co/0dNOiMJ0Zo</a> [343 - @its_KhaTija - ]
29	People all over the world standing in solidarity with South Africa's #FeesMustFall student movement #UnionBuilding https://... [407 - @ReadaBookSA – 23/10/2015]	Well trust students to remix #FeesMustFall #UJ <a href="https://t.co/rrFQM6tLpQ">https://t.co/rrFQM6tLpQ</a> [344 - @ntoske_ndaba – student – 28/09/2016]
30	If anyone describes the students as anything other than spirited, show them this #NationalShutDown #feesmustfall https://t.co... [368 - @azadessa – Journalist at AJazeera – 22/10/2015]	Doing a protest song thread... This song is titled 'Nobody wanna see us together' #FeesMustFall [336 - @Zuryism – 3/10/2016]
31	Not sure what #NationalShutDown & #FeesMustFall is about? Read and share <a href="https://t.co/U3yAAD9bss">https://t.co/U3yAAD9bss</a> <a href="https://t.co/GkN2rdNmFd">https://t.co/GkN2rdNmFd</a> [355 - @zelleimani – Social activist – 22/10/2015]	We have been removed from campus and can no longer cover what is happening on the ground #UCKAR #FeesMustFall [331- @oppidanpress – Student journalism organisation – 17/10/2016]
32	Our presidents ♡ we are led! #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/59V5CyZ98G">https://t.co/59V5CyZ98G</a> (pic of female Wits presidents) [354 - @WitsSRC – Student organisation – 21/10/2015]	National call for solidarity across all universities. #FeesMustFall #WitsPeaceAccord [326 - @WitsFMF – Student organisation – 19/10/2016]
33	Illustrated by :@KyleHenry #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown #UWCShutDown #UCTFeesMustFall Very powerful ☹️👊 <a href="https://t.co/C...">https://t.co/C...</a> [349 - @keagz_92 – Young cooking fan in the cape flats – 22/10/2015]	Mcebo Freedom Dlamini they will ridicule you now but history will remember you well. #FeesMustFall <a href="https://t.co/KLT0ziKeKe">https://t.co/KLT0ziKeKe</a> [320 - @shaeera_k - student activist at Wits – 18/10/2016]
34	Fort hare students are so lit 🤔🤔👊 #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown <a href="https://t.co/6SOLwNGv9p">https://t.co/6SOLwNGv9p</a> [337 - @_sjokojoko – student – 23/10/2015]	thank you @CassperNyovest 🙏 #FeesMustFall #MTVMAMA2016 #mamas <a href="https://t.co/x6UJhkdRn3">https://t.co/x6UJhkdRn3</a> [339 - @S_iphoSihle - Student -22/10/2016]

## A2- Appendix: Code book of the ReMDA

Table 6.17: Main concepts of the realist model of social media discursive action – ReMDA

Categories/concepts	Description
<b>Events/Outcome</b>	<b>Events</b> refer to the effects that mechanisms generate when they interact. Events can be described by some factors or patterns events are presented as an outcome of the work of the powers of generative mechanism.
<b>Experience of discourse on social media</b>	Experiences refer to those events which humans can observe through their senses or using relevant technological means Effects of events upon observers.
<b>Social media content</b>	social media content or digital content is generally multimodal (Text, image, audio, video and links) in addition of being influenced by the affordances of the platform considered for the dissemination of meaning throughout social networks It is text and represents the signs availed on social media to convey the meaning intended by authors
<b>Social media discursive activities / Strategic orientation of messages</b>	Set of social media discursive actions which performance are meant at achieving a specific aim Attitudes, socio-cultural and technological influences (effects of power/dominance, mediatization, social media affordances), genres, registers and platform functionalities
<b>Transformative agency</b>	A negating social agent animating legitimate/illegitimate social role
<b>Agential impetus</b>	Collective intentionality or preparedness for action
<b>Reflexivity</b>	can be defined as the mental capacity of all normal people to consider or deliberate about themselves in relation to their social context and their social context in relation to themselves
<b>Internal conversations</b>	constitute a dialectic between our human concerns and our emotional commentaries upon them
<b>Intentionality</b>	a disposition to act, emerges from emotionalised reflexivity out of concern about the relationship of self and the various attributes of natural, practical and social orders
<b>Creativity</b>	ability to use the discovery of a systemic opportunity to devise novel courses of action (Martin & Wilson, 2016). Creativity is a causal power of a person that uses accessed knowledge to devise new knowledge or to innovate in natural, practical and social terms
<b>Self-consciousness</b>	It realisation comes about through the necessary relation between embodied practice and the non-discursive environment (Archer, 2010b; Luckett & Luckett, 2009). Archer (2010) suggests that the sense of self is continuous throughout human life and necessarily imply the existence of
<b>Self-Monitoring</b>	the ability to continually sense oneself as much as others, in a continuous process of self-discovery.
<b>Context - Socio-cultural and technological emergent properties</b>	Spatiotemporal socio-cultural and technological situation or conditioning within which the phenomenon studied expresses itself; providing directional guidance for strategic action
<b>Post-apartheid Socio-cultural EP</b>	Post-apartheid socio-cultural system conditioning the lives of higher education students in South Africa
<b>Actors' identification (Preparation for collective action)</b>	an individual endowed with a <i>personal identity</i> , as a member of a community, will acquire a social identity by animating a social role into acting upon the world
<b>Legitimation</b>	<b>legitimation</b> is the process of achieving legitimacy through exhibiting predictability of actions, conformity to historical practice or systemic requirements, and alignment with the social values of the local community.
<b>Social role</b>	"social roles" understood as prior definition of obligations, sanctions and interests, and entailing necessary and internal relationships with resources and rules; "institutional level" pertaining to social integration and "System level" constituting a prominent and specific social feature (Archer, 1995).
<b>Signification</b>	Signification refers to the process of meaning creation through the manipulation of signifiers and significant representing iconic, symbolic and indexes of discourses into generating one that fits a particular aim. Besides being a causal power of contextual socio-cultural emergent properties, signification is modulated by mediatization powers of the convergence culture in the media, as well as the powers of the affordances of the social media technology.

Table 6.17 continues...

Categories/concepts	Description
<b>Asignification</b>	a semiotic concept and a generative mechanism rupturing the flow of discursive structures as they break or explode into <i>asignifying particles</i> or <i>signaletic matter</i> or <i>potentiality materially</i> present within the referent of a sign as part-signs
<b>Domination/dominance</b>	Hegemony in this research can be envisioned as the socio-cultural conditions behind the fee increases and the precariousness of most South African higher education students of African descent. as the focus of the relentless struggle to “ <i>construct or sustain or fracture alliances and relations of domination/subordination</i> ” around points of extreme precariousness between South African community members and authorities or powers within their environment
<b>Power</b>	a generative mechanism or tendency emerging from Socio-cultural structures of society constraining or enabling agents into performing an activity, causing another party to comply and execute a directive even against its will.
<b>Spiral of silence</b>	individuals’ fear of social isolation leads them to remain silent instead of voicing their opinions when they differ or diverge from the dominant or public opinion
<b>Convergence culture and globalisation</b>	the phenomenon of media convergence matching a fast-growing participatory culture globalisation refers to a socio-cultural and spatial systemic form emerging from mainly North American and Western European imperialist neo-liberal and capitalist tendencies of market expansion, cultural dominance, and the growing power of corporations and other nonstate actors; in addition to the dominance of international institutions over country states and the growing irrelevance of national borders to trade
<b>Mediatization</b>	an emergent property of relationship at the nexus of interaction between socio-cultural systemic powers, social media and South African community members agential impetus Mediatization theory frames a <i>media-centred</i> process by which the medium of communication, the practice of communication, and the environment in which communication takes place are shaped
<b>Socio-cultural embeddedness and under-design</b>	Socio-cultural elements purposefully included or omitted in the design (shape and functioning) of social media platforms
<b>Misfits and workaround</b>	An emergent property of relationships or dynamic generative mechanisms enabling or not complementary or contradictory integration of social media technology into South African post-apartheid system
<b>Social media technology</b>	Social media considered in this research are social networking sites (SNS); especially Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. They are understood as an instantiation of complex social networks on web-based technologies and systems creating interactive platforms allowing individuals and organisations to share, co-create, exchange and modify user-generated content. It is an IT artefact considered to be embedded in time, space, discourse and community, and emerging from ongoing socio-economic interactive practices.
<b>Social media affordances</b>	Affordances in this research are understood as the possibilities or opportunities for action which social media offer to social actors during social movements, as they interact with that object in their environment
<b>Space of autonomous resistance / Space of transformative negation</b>	The Space of autonomous resistance / Space of transformative negation is generated by or is an outcome of the social practice of social media discourse during social movement. Relational emerging property generated by networked community members enacting discursive activities of everyday resistance on social media. It rises from autonomous reflexive and creativity agency, reacting in necessary resistance to the conditions of their social role, the conditions of their social identity, the legitimacy of the hegemon, the weight of the imposed spiral of silence, and the narrowing of their abilities to asignify/signify hegemonic frames and narratives.

### A3- Appendix: Interview protocol

The aim of this research is to explain South African community members' emergent usage of social media during social movements by providing a contextualised social history of their online discursive enactment of everyday resistance. In-depth and semi-structured interviews are used in this research in order to complement the collection of social media data. Interviews will provide the depth of information from general members of the public and students who have contributed in discussions about #feesmustfall over social media. Hence, this interview protocol will only be finalised after social media data and various public documents have been collected. It is understood that the participant always has the possibility to wave "Prefer not to answer" as a response to any of the questions posed.

Tentative interview questions related to research questions are provided in Table A2 that follows.

**Table A2: Tentative interview questions for the research**

Tentative interview questions	Research questions	Objective of questions
<p><b>Discourse on social media: content generation, content and experience of use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would you describe your experience of posting and consuming messages on social media?</li> <li>- What type of content is more amenable to you between video, audio, and text? What about 2 types combined or all the types combined at the same time?</li> <li>- What do you feel when consuming information from social media during #feesmustfall?</li> <li>- Have you visited the website and social media accounts of local media outlets and authorities?</li> <li>- What kind of information was availed on the social media pages you consulted?</li> <li>- How helpful was the information published on social media with regards to the #feesmustfall social movement?</li> <li>- Have you posted content on social media during #feesmustfall?</li> <li>- Were you feeling comfortable discussing your inner thoughts about #feesmustfall over social media?</li> </ul>	<p><i>How do South African community members interact over social media during social movements?</i></p>	<p>To determine social media competencies bestowed by South African community members during social movements</p>
<p><b>Reflexivity and creativity</b> (strategy, plans and execution)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What were your intention when you were posting messages on social media during #feesmustfall?</li> <li>- How were you using social media during #feesmustfall events?</li> <li>- What do you usually discuss online with your social media "friends"?</li> <li>- What were your favourite topics of social media discussions during #feesmustfall?</li> <li>- How would you have gone about constructing your messages on social media during #feesmustfall?</li> <li>- Did you feel confident to post messages online during #feesmustfall?</li> </ul>	<p><i>What social media strategies do community members implement in order to influence during social movements in sub-Saharan Africa?</i></p>	<p>To determine community members social media influential strategies implemented during social movements</p>

Table A2 continues...

Tentative interview questions	Research questions	Objective of questions
<p><b>Community members socio-cultural background - Offline / Online social network and social capital</b> (Culture, ideology and influence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would you say that you are a Coloured, a Black, a Chinese, an Indian or a White person?</li> <li>- What is your home language?</li> <li>- What is your main occupation?</li> <li>- How would you qualify the act of posting messages on social media during #feesmustfall?</li> <li>- What social media role were you playing during the events of #feesmustfall? Reader? Collaborator? Contributor or Leader?</li> <li>- Who are your most influential thought leaders?</li> <li>- Who are the people you think are the most influential members of your online social network?</li> <li>- Do you have a friend or a relative in position of authority?</li> <li>- How would you describe the relationship of someone from your background with authority?</li> </ul> <p><b>Post-apartheid social system</b> (Power and dominance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is post-apartheid South Africa to you?</li> <li>- How much influence over the society and authorities do you think that your contributions on social media would have made?</li> <li>- How would you describe government provisions for higher education students?</li> <li>- What would you have wanted to say on social media during #feesmustfall events?</li> <li>- What do you think was the reason for #feesmustfall to you?</li> <li>- Who were the #feesmustfall protesters to you?</li> </ul> <p><b>Mediatization and social media affordance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are your favourite social media platforms?</li> <li>- Why are they your favourites? How do you use them?</li> <li>- How do social media websites function?</li> <li>- How easy is it to post a message on social media?</li> <li>- How do you contribute comments on a social media website? Do you use text, pictures or videos?</li> <li>- What language did you use on social media during #feesmustfall?</li> </ul>	<p><i>What are social mechanisms and social media affordances shaping community members strategies and interactions on social media during social movements?</i></p>	<p>To determine social mechanisms and social media affordances shaping community members strategies and interactions on social media during social movements</p>

#### A4- Appendix: Consent form and ethics approvals



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
**FACULTY OF COMMERCE**  
Igniting Knowledge and Opportunity



Dear participant,

This is a participant consent form for an interview as part of a doctoral research project.

The aim of this research is to explain South African community members' emergent usage of social media during the #feesmustfall social movement by providing a contextualised social history of the emergence of the online discursive enactment of everyday resistance availed online in 2015 and 2016. This research has been approved by UCT Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee. Participants are expected to undergo an interview in which he/she will be providing answers to questions to his/her ability. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

There are no known risks or dangers to you, associated with your participation in this research. The researcher will not attempt to identify you with your responses, or to name you as a participant in the research, nor will he facilitate anyone else's doing so.

Should you have any questions regarding this research project, please feel free to contact the researcher: Mr Laban Bagui ([Bgxlab001@myuct.ac.za](mailto:Bgxlab001@myuct.ac.za))

Please sign where provided below (Interviewee) consenting as per the following statements:

**I acknowledge that I am participating in this research of my own free will. I understand that I may refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without penalty. If I wish, I will be given a copy of this consent form.**

Interviewee Signature .....

Date .....

Interviewer Signature .....

Date .....



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@Commerce\_UCT



UCT Commerce Faculty Office

02 August 2018

Mr Laban Bagui  
School Of Economics  
University of Cape Town

REF: REC 2018/008/064

Dear Laban Bagui,

**An analytical tale of the emergent usage of social media during sub-Saharan African social movements**

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid for 1 year and may be renewed upon application.

Please be aware that you need to notify the Ethics Committee immediately should any aspect of your study regarding the engagement with participants as approved in this application, change. This may include aspects such as changes to the research design, questionnaires, or choice of participants. The ongoing ethical conduct throughout the duration of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

We wish you well for your research.

Modie Sempu  
Administrative Assistant  
University of Cape Town  
Commerce Faculty Office  
Room 2.26 | Leslie Commerce Building

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*"Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."*



## Faculty of Commerce

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@Commerce\_UCT



UCT Commerce Faculty Office

17 May 2016

Ref:0608201501

Laban Bagui


**Project title:** Explaining the strategic use of social media in public participation for local governance policy making in developing countries: The case of the city of Cape Town – South Africa

Dear Researcher,

This letter serves to confirm that this project as described in your submitted protocol has been approved.

Please note that if you make any substantial change in your research procedure that could affect the experiences of the participants, you must submit a revised protocol to the Committee for approval.

Regards,  
Ms. Samantha Alexander  
Administrative Assistant  
University of Cape Town  
Commerce Faculty Office  
Room 2.24 | Leslie Commerce Building

	<b>RESEARCH ACCESS TO STUDENTS</b>	<b>DSA 100</b>
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**NOTES**

- This form must be FULLY completed by all applicants that want to access UCT students for the purpose of research.
- Return the fully completed (a) DSA 100 application form by email, in the same word format, together with your: (b) research proposal inclusive of your survey, (c) copy of your ethics approval letter / proof (d) informed consent letter to: [Moonira.Khan@uct.ac.za](mailto:Moonira.Khan@uct.ac.za). Your application will be attended to by the Executive Director, Department of Student Affairs (DSA), UCT.
- The turnaround time for a reply is approximately 10 working days.
- NB! It is the responsibility of the researcher/s to apply for and to obtain ethics approval and to comply with amendments that may be requested; as well as to obtain approval to access UCT staff and/or UCT students, from the following, at UCT, respectively: (a) Ethics: Chairperson, Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) for ethics approval, (b) Staff access: Executive Director: HR for approval to access UCT staff, and (c) Student access: Executive Director: Student Affairs for approval to access UCT students.
- Note: UCT Senate Research Protocols requires compliance to the above, even if prior approval has been obtained from any other institution/agency. UCT's research protocol requirements applies to all persons, institutions and agencies from UCT and external to UCT who want to conduct research on human subjects for academic, marketing or service related reasons at UCT.
- Should approval be granted to access UCT students for this research study, such approval is effective for a period of one year from the date of approval (as stated in Section D of this form), and the approval expires automatically on the last day.
- The approving authority reserves the right to revoke an approval based on reasonable grounds and/or new information.

**SECTION A: RESEARCH APPLICANT/S DETAILS**

Position	Staff / Student No	Title and Name	Contact Details (Email / Cell / land line)
A.1 Student Number	BGXLAB001	Mr Laban Bagul	labanbagul@gmail.com
A.2 Academic / PASS Staff No.			
A.3 Visitor/ Researcher ID No.			
A.4 University at which a student or employee	UCT	Address if <u>not</u> UCT:	
A.5 Faculty/ Department/School	Information Systems		
A.6 APPLICANTS DETAILS If different from above	Title and Name	Tel.	Email

**SECTION B: RESEARCHER/S SUPERVISOR/S DETAILS**

Position	Title and Name	Tel.	Email
B.1 Supervisor	Prof Kevin Johnston	+27 (21) 650-2266	kevin.johnston@uct.ac.za
B.2 Co-Supervisor/s	Prof Peter Weimann	+27-21-650 3832	peter.weimann@uct.ac.za


**SECTION C: APPLICANT'S RESEARCH STUDY FIELD AND APPROVAL STATUS**

C.1 Degree – If applicable	PHD Information Systems
C.2 Research Project Title	Agency and mechanisms of the emergent usage of social media in public participation in sub-Saharan Africa
C.3 Research Proposal	Attached: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
C.4 Target population	UCT students who posted messages on "twitter (TM)" during #feesmustfall social movement events
C.5 Lead Researcher details	If different from applicant:
C.6 Will use research assistant/s	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes: provide a list of names, contact details and ID no.
C.7 Research Methodology and Informed consent:	Research methodology: Informed consent: In-depth Interviews
C.8 Ethics clearance status from UCT's Faculty Ethics Research Committee (FREC)	Approved by the FREC Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With amendments: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (a) Attach copy of your ethics approval. Attached: Yes (b) State date and reference no. of ethics approval: Date: 20-07-2016 Ref. No.:6070697

**SECTION D: APPLICANT/S APPROVAL STATUS FOR ACCESS TO STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE  
(To be completed by the LD, DSA or Nominee)**

D.1 APPROVAL STATUS	Approved / With Terms / Not	* Conditional approval with terms	Applicant's Ref. No.:
	(I) Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (II) With terms <input type="checkbox"/> (III) Not approved <input type="checkbox"/>	(a) Access to students for this research study must only be undertaken after written ethics approval has been obtained. (b) In event any ethics conditions are attached, these must be complied with before access to students.	BGXLAB001/ Mr Laban Bagul
D.2 APPROVED BY:	Designation	Name	Signature
	Executive Director Department of Student Affairs	Dr Moonira Khan	signature removed
			Date of Approval 1 August 2016



STUDENT  
ADMINISTRATION   
Administration Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
ashaikjee@uwc.ac.za, nschoeman@uwc.ac.za  
021 959 2110

27 July 2016

Dear Laban Bagui

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

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

Signature removed

DR AHMED SHAIKJEE  
MANAGER: STUDENT ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

## A5- Appendix: List of main documents reviewed as part of #feesmustfall intertextual analysis

Table A3: Main documents reviewed as part of #feesmustfall intertextual analysis

Authors	Year	Reference
Umkhonto we Sizwe	1961	<b>Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation - Military wing of the ANC): We are at War!</b>
Dawn	1984	<b>Dawn:</b> Journal of the Umkhonto we Sizwe, 8:4
Thula Simpson	2016	Umkhonto we Sizwe: the ANC's armed struggle
Republic of South Africa - RSA	1996	<b>The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa</b>
RSA	1994	<b>Regulation of gatherings act</b> 205 of 1993
RSA	1994	<b>Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP)</b>
RSA	1996	<b>National education policy act</b> no. 27 of 1996
RSA	1998	<b>Employment Equity act 55 of 1998</b> , <i>Government Gazette</i> , 400:19370
RSA	1997	<b>Higher Education Act</b> 101 OF 1997
RSA	1996	Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) program
Dinokeng scenario team	2009	<b>The Dinokeng Scenarios: 3 futures for South Africa</b>
RSA – National Planning Commission	2012	<b>National Development Plan 2030: Our future - make it work</b> , <a href="https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf">https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf</a>
African National Congress - ANC	2007	<b>52nd National Conference: Resolutions</b>
ANC	2012	<b>ANC constitution</b>
RSA	2014	<b>BEE amendment act No46 of 2013</b> , <i>Government Gazette</i> , 583:37271
RSA - Presidency	2014	<b>Twenty years review: South Africa 1994 – 2016</b> , <a href="http://www.nvf.co.za/home/22/files/20YearReview.pdf">http://www.nvf.co.za/home/22/files/20YearReview.pdf</a>
Africa Check	2016	<b>FACTSHEET: Funding and the changing face of South Africa's public universities</b> <a href="https://africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-funding-changing-face-sas-public-universities/">https://africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-funding-changing-face-sas-public-universities/</a>
SAHO – South African History Online	2017	<b>South Africa's Key economic policies changes (1994 - 2013)</b> <a href="https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/south-africa%E2%80%99s-key-economic-policies-changes-1994-2013">https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/south-africa%E2%80%99s-key-economic-policies-changes-1994-2013</a>
RSA	2017	<b>Report of the High-Level Panel On The Assessment Of Key Legislation And The Acceleration Of Fundamental Change</b> , <a href="https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Pages/2017/october/High_Level_Panel/HLP_Report/HLP_report.pdf">https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Pages/2017/october/High_Level_Panel/HLP_Report/HLP_report.pdf</a>
SAHO	2013	<b>Marikana Massacre 16 August 2012</b> <a href="https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/marikana-massacre-16-august-2012">https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/marikana-massacre-16-august-2012</a>
WC-High Court	2015	<b>Court order on case 20313</b>
Monday Monthly: The UCT Newspaper	2015	<b>Rhodes Falls – Transformation takes a leap forward</b>
Milisuthando Bongela (Mail&Guardian)	2016	<b>#FeesMustFall anthem is a historic modern spiritual</b> <a href="https://mg.co.za/article/2016-10-21-00-fmf-anthem-is-a-historic-modern-spiritual">https://mg.co.za/article/2016-10-21-00-fmf-anthem-is-a-historic-modern-spiritual</a>

Table A3 continues...

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Reference</b>
UCT	2015	<b>2015 – A year in review</b>
UCT	2016	<b>2016 – A year in review</b>
UCT	2018	<b>2017 – A year in review</b>
Online content	2016	<a href="http://mg.co.za/tag/university-fees-protests">http://mg.co.za/tag/university-fees-protests</a> <a href="http://www.labnol.org/internet/save-twitter-hashtag-tweets/6505/">http://www.labnol.org/internet/save-twitter-hashtag-tweets/6505/</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTDdjafMmzw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTDdjafMmzw</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-sOzCvPq-s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-sOzCvPq-s</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUsoVIDFqZg&amp;index=13&amp;list=RDMMkJ4s3G7hgR4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUsoVIDFqZg&amp;index=13&amp;list=RDMMkJ4s3G7hgR4</a>
Statistics South Africa	2015– 2018	Mid-Year population estimates 2018 Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q2 2018 General Household Survey 2017 Gender series volume I: Economic empowerment, 2001–2014