The role of the media on the development of Black Consciousness, identity and social change: a study of the 1976 and 2015-2016 student uprisings in South Africa

by

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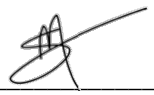

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents and all those who bravely envisioned and actively pursued a better life for Africans. Your contributions have changed the world!

To the group of 1976, you gave more than your lives to attain freedom. You have exemplified what it takes for young people to bring about change by studying the principles of unity, Black Consciousness and solidarity.

To the Fallists, you have amplified the voices that were previously not heard by your predecessors. Your actions had a profound global impact. You have ignited a sense of awakening in this emerging generation!

ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of media on the development of consciousness in student activists of the 1976 and 2015-2016 student movements in South Africa. It explores how media exposure influenced their consciousness, identity development, and social awareness. This study reveals that both, the 1976 student uprising and 2015-2016 Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movements, embraced the principles of Black Consciousness. It examines the influence of the Black Consciousness ideology on increasing awareness among students regarding the resistance against power structures and the questioning of South Africa's educational system. It employed two data collection techniques namely, content analysis of media texts and semi-structured interviews with student activists to understand their experiences. The study found that media is a dynamic and inclusive concept, incorporating various forms of communication such as spoken language, visual arts, literary works and musical lyrics. It was the impact of Black Consciousness and the commitment to its ideals that motivated both student groups to actively question and resist the methods and approaches used in their respective education systems. According to this study's findings, the media plays a significant role in protest movements by fostering political consciousness and shaping the concept of identity in media users. This study recommends further research on Black theology in South Africa, music as a protest medium, and the outcomes of the Fallism movement, particularly in relation to tertiary institutions and the role of the media in communicating these outcomes and holding the state accountable as a fourth estate of the realm.

Key terms: Media, identity, protest movements, Social Structures, Black Consciousness, Bantu Education/Decolonised Education, South African Student Movement (SASO)

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC: African National Congress

BC: Black Consciousness

BE: Bantu Education

EFF: Economic Freedom Fighters

FMF: Fees Must Fall

HNP: Herenigde Nasionale Party (Reformed National Party)

NAYO: National Youth Organisation

NP: National Party

NSFAS: National Student Financial Aid Scheme

RMF: Rhodes Must Fall

SASCO: South African Student Congress

SASM: South African Student Movement

SASO: South African Student Organisation

SCM: Student Christian Movement

SRC: Student Representative Council

SSRC: Soweto Student Representative Council

SU: University of Stellenbosch

TRYO: Transvaal Youth Organisation

UCT: University of Cape Town

UFS: University of the Free State

UJ: University of Johannesburg

WITS: University of the Witwatersrand

X: Social media platform formerly known as twitter

YCL: Young Communist League

LIST OF TABLES:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

Protest movements bring together different groups of people who share a common goal of promoting social, political, economic, religious, or cultural change through various forms of protest tactics such as marches, riots, sit-ins, and demonstrations. These movements generally work toward a shared vision. They attempt to create or resist change, or provide a political voice to the marginalised, using tools such as media to shed light on their plight and to raise awareness and gain support (McCurdy, 2012; Bonilla & Rosa, 2015).

As a response to discontent with the national education system, student riots have played a significant role in the South African historical landscape. These riots include the 1976 student uprising, Rhodes and Fees Must Fall and the 2021 #WitsAsinamali (WITS, we do not have money) protest, which all symbolise the demand for the right to receive high-quality education by students (Mlaba, 2021; Ntombana, Gwala, and Sibanda, 2023). The Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movements, which are being examined, were not solely focused on the collapse of university fee structures. They also aimed to address issues of decolonisation and the inclusion of African perspectives within their respective institutions. This view shares its theme with the 1976 student movement, which advocated for the recognition of Black identity in the education system and the elimination of Afrikaans as a language of instruction. The protests are linked not only to educational concerns but also to political and economic power struggles, encompassing issues of ethnic and national identity as well as cultural representation (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Giddens, 2023).

This study argues that the term *media* encompasses not only the conventionally defined "mainstream media" (print and broadcast media, including newspapers and magazines), but also the various ways in which people communicate, including written, oral, and visual means such as pictures and clothing (Sinanan, 2017). This study therefore adopts McLuhan's (2003: 10) seminal understanding of media which posits that the "medium is the message" because it "shapes and controls the scale and form

of human association and action". According to McLuhan (2003), the media is what people see when they read or interact with the message. This study thus positions oral history, protest action, student newsletters and social media platforms such as X, as mediums of communication. Mainstream media have played a central role in ensuring the dissemination of protest movements by reporting on them and indirectly raising awareness about them. The South African media landscape in 1976 was different from what it is today. This could be because of the censorship enforced on the media by the apartheid regime at the time (Breytenbach, 1997; Merrett, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the media that was used to strengthen or support the message of the 1976 student uprisings is referred to as "alternative media." The media landscape in 2015-2016, on the other hand, expanded from the traditional or mainstream media of the 1970s, which included magazines, newspapers, radio, TV, and other media, to a variety of "new media" that includes social media sites such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn (Stöber, 2004).

The purpose of this study is to discuss the various roles that the media played in 1976 and 2015-2016 which represent the respective eras of student uprisings. It considers how the media provided a platform for those social uprisings to communicate a specific message of social change while further contributing to the formation of identity and consciousness in the participating students.

There is a considerable body of literature on political consciousness and education among Black students such as Diemer and Li (2011) which focuses on critical consciousness or the awakening to one's identity in the youth and Leath and Chavous (2018) which reports the effects of political self-awareness, racial campus climate, and sociopolitical beliefs, which speak to the heart of this study. However, this study will focus only on the emergence of Black Consciousness as a direct consequence of the social structure of apartheid and how it may have contributed to the development of student movements in South Africa as well as the formation of identity and the consciousness to fight for social change. Unlike the above studies, this study also centres on the role of media in building up a conscious identity among student activists.

This study also incorporates elements of other proponents of Black identity as defined by Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Junior, Patrice Lumumba, Frans Fanon, Robert

Sobukwe, and Steve Biko's lives and words on the emergence of Black Consciousness and its role in student protest movements in South Africa.

According to Scolari (2013: 1420), “all media were once new media," but the evolution of these communication media created new avenues for growth. For example, the oral transfer of information progressed into the written and printed word, which itself evolved into electronic communication (television and radio) as well as the current reliance on digital communication (Scolari, 2013; Sutrisno, 2023). The transfer of information through language has been society's heartbeat, and it has helped its longevity because people rely on it to communicate their intentions (Fourie, 2009).

Klandermans (2014), contends that when a social identity is discovered and embraced (through any outlet the message is shared), people who share that identity solidify themselves in that group as unique and together. This study examines this point by highlighting the ways in which social structures define how society should be grouped together to solidify the intended rule and agenda of those in power and how that in turn results in the formation of consciousness, which is necessary for the birth of protest movements. Çoban (2018) describes this phenomenon as an element in a system that is dominant and superior to others or the acquisition of power by the dominant class with the consent of the submissive. However, the actions of the student activists in 1976 and 2015-2016 show no consent or submission. One would ask, what is it that resulted in the consciousness of the students and their determined refusal to submit to the identity presented to them by their suppressors? This study argues that there is a relationship between the availability of and/or exposure to various media and the transfer of information in the process of forming social identity. This study examines how the students of 1976 and 2015-2016 broke the mould of their social structures to create their own identity and consciousness, with the aim of addressing the social and educational barriers they encountered.

The students of 1976 defined their identity and their aspiration, which resulted in the replacement of the term “non-white” with a declaration of Blackness and Black Consciousness as a way of life (Heffernan & Nieftagodien, 2016). The Rhodes and Fees Must Fall (Fallism) movement of 2015-2016 echoed the same confidence and understanding of identity, demonstrating that greater commitment to an identity leads

to greater effort in enacting that identity (Stets & Burke, 2000). This study further argues that apartheid and its systems, including the Bantu Education Act, led to the formation of the 1976 student protest movement, which inspired the Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movement of 2015-2016, and that both movements were founded on Black Consciousness (disseminated through the media) and resistance to a colonial education system. It therefore relies on a qualitative research methodology that gathers data through semi-structured interviews with key activists of the two movements as well as a systematic content analysis (Strydom, 2001) of existing alternative media from the two movements.

Disclaimer:
This study examines historical events from two distinct time periods, (1976 and 2015-2016). It therefore references literature dating back to the 1970s. This literature presents contemporary contextual arguments relevant to the period, focusing on student movements. The study however, strives to integrate current literature to support the argument regarding student movements and protests in South Africa.
For clarity, this study uses the terms "students", "student activists", and "youth" interchangeably to refer to the collective term "students", as it focuses on young members of society at educational institutions. The same is true for “youth activism”, “youth movements” and “student protests” as they are equivalent terms that describe protest movements initiated by students.

1.2 Problem statement

The media functions as a crucial source of information for active and passive audiences (Fourie 2009; Mahl, Schäfer & Zeng, 2023). Mainstream media aids the political and democratic processes of a country by disseminating needed information (Mehraj, Bhat & Mehraj, 2014). The more informed the public is about the agenda of political movements, the more likely the members are to be alert and informed about social ills and disservices, and more likely to be active towards social change.

During apartheid, South Africa’s media system was designed to keep social order, with the National Party using censorship to control what the media published (Merrett,

2001). The law that was in place at the time was the Publications Act of 1974, which gave the National Party the authority to censor movies, plays, books, and other entertainment shows, as well as to repress citizens in terms of what they could or could not watch (Merrett, 2001).

The use of media in a broad sense, contributes to changing people's attitudes and habits in both negative and positive ways (Mehraj, Bhat & Mehraj, 2014). However, a consideration of the agenda of mainstream media and its influence on steering social awareness and change shows that positive and negative factors influence consciousness and identity, depending on one's frame of reference (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). This study therefore positions the media as a vehicle for transmitting identity through the information it conveys. Therefore, understanding one's identity before participating in protest movements is fundamental. As Klandermans (2014) asserts, once individuals discover and accept their social identity, they establish a sense of belonging with others who share the same identity, thereby forming a distinct and united group.

This study suggests that the social consciousness of South Africa's student activists, within the framework of Black Consciousness and identity development, was shaped by media engagement through conversations, exposure to various media, and publications like the South African Student Organisation's (SASO) Newsletters in 1976 and students' posts on X (formerly known as Twitter) in 2015-2016. This study therefore analyses the role of this media (SASO Newsletter and X) in raising awareness among students about their Black identity in order to challenge dominant social structures and promote social change.

Bosch (2016: 224) asserts that "social networks... promote participation in protest behaviour among [students]" because… "they facilitate access to large numbers of contacts, enabling movements to reach critical mass". Bosch (2016: 224) therefore contends that social media promotes "the construction of group identities that are key features of protest behaviour, because they function as information hubs" (Bosch, 2016: 224). According to Mpofu (2017), disrupting the norms of society to advance and give voice to the grievances of the marginalised is necessary for strategic and effective communication. Therefore, the researcher posits, as guided by Mpofu (2017),

that action, not just technology, mediates communication, implying that student activists' protests are acts of disruption. Without protesting, the students of 1976 and 2015-2016 would not have changed the social norms in their education systems. This change in events is, according to Mpofu (2017), an act of disruption.

Nomvete and Mashayamombe (2019) discuss the 2015 student uprising at the University of Pretoria, with a slight reference to the 1976 student uprising. Similarly, Fekisi (2018) investigates Drum magazine's coverage of the student movements of 1976 and 2015, specifically the similarities and differences through a frame analysis of the movement's articles. Fekisi's (2018) study focuses solely on a content analysis of Drum magazine's coverage of both movements. Jansen (2019) examines the prevalence of Black Consciousness in the October 2015 Fees Must Fall protests at the Union Buildings, highlighting the generational transfer of student activism from parent (1976) to child (2015) through an "autoethnographic" presentation of her own experiences as a student in 1980 and a bystander in 2015. Martinerie (2021), on the other hand, addresses the physical and mental symbols of apartheid as well as the influence of Black consciousness on the students of 2015. Focusing on aspects such as intersectionality, non-racialism, and decolonisation Martinerie (2015) further compares the South African Student Organisation (SASO) and Must Fall movements as higher education establishments seeking liberation from white ideals within the higher education sector.

However, this study fills an academic void by merging the 1976 and 2015-2016 student movements into a single philosophy: Black Consciousness. It does so by examining the participant narratives and media texts that both student groups encountered in the process of forming their identities and consciousness. To achieve this merger, this study combines two academic disciplines, namely social movement studies and communication and media studies. Additionally, it provides a comprehensive examination of the Afrikaner culture's role in shaping laws and systems aimed at eroding the identity of the Black community and how that has contributed to the conscientisation of those who participated in the two movements.

1.3 Research aim

This study examines how the media influenced the formation of Black Consciousness and identity among South African students during and after apartheid. It analyses the role of SASO Newsletters and X's contribution to the formation of student activism, Black Consciousness and identity in South Africa's student activists as well as other forms of media such as conversations, art, and music as contributors to identity development.

This study aims to demonstrate the importance of the media as a form of communication that influences social protest movements and inspires social change. Firstly, during the process of forming one's individual identity and fostering Black Consciousness, and secondly, when striving for the intended social transformation on a wider scale such as joining activist groups. This involves probing social structures and defining them, along with examining the concept of identity. The main objective is to show the role of the media in shaping Black Consciousness and identity among the youth which participated in student activism in South Africa during the two periods.

1.4 Research questions

The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

1. What led to the consciousness of the 1976 and 2015-2016 movement activists?
2. What role did various media play in conscientising the youth and developing the identity of the movement participants?
3. What is the relationship between social protest and identity within the framework of South Africa's social structures?

1.5 Research objectives

The objective of this study is to determine:

1. The source of the conscientisation of the 1976 and 2015-2016 movement activists.

2. The role the media played in conscientising and developing the identity of the movement participants.
3. The relationship between social protest and identity within the framework of South Africa's social structures.

1.6 Structure of the study

Chapter One: Introduction and Context of the Study

The current chapter provides an overview of the study by establishing the context of its purpose and the necessity to address the identified gap in the existing literature. It also provides an overview of this study's objectives, research questions, and the problem statement that led to the purpose of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Two explores the conceptual framework of the study and literature by other scholars who have analysed this study's main themes, which include media representation, identity, and protest movements. This study considers theories such as cognitive dissonance, media framing, and availability heuristics that are used by the media to shape the development of identity in media users.

Chapter Three: Contextualisation of South African History and Student Movements

The third chapter examines the historical progression of South Africa, focusing on the evolution of the Afrikaner identity from the arrival of the Dutch at the Cape in 1652 to the establishment of the Union of South Africa. It also discusses the legislative measures that supported the implementation and continuation of Apartheid. The chapter delves deeper into the progression of the Bantu Education system as a catalyst for the emergence of Black Consciousness and subsequently the student movement of 1976. It also explores the identity of South African Black youth during the period of democracy as well as the recurrence of history in the education system, as seen in the Fallism movement of 2015-2016.

Chapter Four: Methodology. Chapter Four provides the description of data collection methods as well as an outline of the research sample. The chapter also describes the approach to analysing data, which is organised according to a thematic analysis. This study is based on a qualitative research methodology in which data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and the analysis of pre-existing media texts. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the research process and methodologies employed in studying the two student movements, namely the 1976 Student Uprising and the Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movement of 2015-2016.

Chapter Five: Research Findings and Analysis – 1976 Uprising

In Chapter Five, the thematic findings derived from conducting semi-structured interviews with the participants of the 1976 movement are presented. Each theme is thoroughly examined to analyse the role of media and the motivations behind the participants' involvement in the 1976 student uprising in their respective regions. Additionally, it analyses media texts from SASO Newsletters in order to investigate the content and its impact on the youth of 1976.

Chapter Six: Research findings and analysis – 2015-2016 Fees and Rhodes Must Fall

Chapter Six presents the thematic findings derived from semi-structured interviews with the participants of the Fallism movement of 2015-2016. Each theme is thoroughly examined to analyse the role of media and the motivations behind the participants' involvement in the Fallism movement at their respective universities. Additionally, it analyses media texts from X in order to investigate the content and its impact on the Fallists of 2015-2016.

Chapter Seven: Discussion of results

The seventh chapter presents the results of the study in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three. The content is divided into two parts each analysing the outcomes of the 1976 student uprising and the 2015-2016 Fallism movement, which are linked to the research objectives of this study. It also examines the impact of the 1976 uprising and the 2015-2016 Fallism movement on global social norms.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion of the study

The last chapter concludes the study and provides recommendations for future research.

1.7 Chapter conclusion

The present chapter focuses on the concept and motivation behind the study. It describes the objectives and questions being investigated in addition to the research problem. The chapter also identifies the knowledge gap and the need for this study to close it. Finally, it includes a succinct description of the conceptual framework that influenced and directed the study, which will be defined in detail, in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the rationale behind this study, its aim, objectives, and research questions, as well as the structure and conceptual framework. The present chapter examines the chosen literature to analyse the correlation between the development of identity and the emergence of by protest movements against a country's social structures while also investigating the influence of the media on both phenomena. The literature review therefore, focuses on the concepts of identity, social structures, Black Consciousness and the theory of cognitive dissonance and media forms in both the 1976 and 2015-2016 cases. Additionally, this chapter illustrates the role of media as a tool of influence and creating consciousness among its audience, while also delving into the concept of social change in South Africa.

2.2 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a logically constructed argument that provides a rationale for conducting a study and that gives it direction and purpose (Varpio et al, 2020). The conceptual framework approach entails the careful selection of theories to bolster and illuminate the research questions. According to Tamene (2016), conceptual frameworks present existing literature information and demonstrate how it can inform, refine and support a research study. Based on these definitions, this study interprets conceptual frameworks as building blocks of theories and concepts that collaborate harmoniously to achieve the research objective. The concepts and theories that contribute to the framework and strengthen the justification for this study include social structures, identity, Black Consciousness, media, and cognitive dissonance. The selection of the concepts and theories was aided by Leshem and Trafford (2007) who assert that conceptual framework selection is influenced by curiosity and reflection on theoretical positions. This study centres on the protest movements led by South African youth.

2.2.1 Social Structures

According to Fleetwood (2008), the term social structure encompasses all human actions or activities, including law, architecture and organisations. It also includes specific social elements such as social class, race and gender, and refers to "rules, relations, positions, processes, systems, values, and meanings" (Fleetwood, 2008:242). Based on Fleetwood's definition, social structures can be defined as the place where human connections converge, shaping the daily interactions between individuals. Fleetwood's (2008) definition does not encompass human behaviour, a necessary component in the context of this study, which focuses on human behaviour. Merolla, Serpe, Stryker and Schultz (2012) addresses the human behaviour element by extending the concept of social structures to cover three categories namely, large social structures, intermediate social structures, and proximate social structures. Large social structures refer to those arrangements that involve macro-oriented sociologists such as race, class, gender or a nation. Intermediate social structures on the other hand refer to more localised networks such as neighbourhoods, universities or schools that bring sizable sets of people together in particular settings. Lastly, proximate social structures are closest to human engagements and behaviour such as families, debating clubs or friendship groups where one would usually enact an individual role identity (Merolla et al, 2012).

According to Merolla et al (2012), proximate structures serve as a structural link between large and intermediate structures and individual role identity. Without proximate structures, the large and intermediate structures would exist in isolation from human interaction, which reiterates Fleetwood's (2008) definition of social structures. From this broad definition, it can also be deduced that concepts such as apartheid and Black Consciousness are social structures that are similar in framework because they both sought to uphold a separate development of one race or culture over the other (Gilomee, 2019; Esterhuizen, 2015). This is because the goal of apartheid was to sort population groups simultaneously as species and classes (Mbembe, 2017) whereas Black Consciousness sought to reverse this notion by establishing identity formation and a sense of self through thought provocation and education that contrasted with a system that taught shame and defeat.

According to Gibson (2011), Black Consciousness wanted to create an environment where Black people could think about action towards liberation rather than being subjected to the values of white liberals that would dilute the intent of the Black Consciousness Movement, which sought to reject white values and systems. The Black Consciousness Movement therefore became a tool for engaging with those whose humanity and existence was questioned by the western world (Mpungose, 2016). The two social structures of apartheid and Black Consciousness Movement, while at opposing ends, sought to improve the lives of those they were targeting. For Stets and Burke (2003), social structures form an abstract concept because they emerge from individual actions over time, but individual actions also occur in the context of the social structure within which the individuals exist (Stets & Burke, 2003). This concept aligns with Merolla et al's (2012) perspective on proximate social structures serving as a structural connection between larger and intermediate structures.

Smith's (1998) contribution to this study of social structures is that they categorise elements such as ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes and demographic groups as valuable scientific generalisations which, when applied correctly through connections, can unite people without their knowledge of the existence of such categories. Demographic groups refer to how people are related to or connected to each other through concepts such as "transmitter and receptor" (Smith, 1998:92). This study argues that the media contributes (transmits) such categories to its audience (receptor), defining its audience, thus shaping their identity.

Lastly, Van Wart, McIntyre and Hall (2023) introduce the concept of social exclusion within social structures as a phenomenon that occurs when there is a widespread lack of the nine factors identified as constituting social capital. They outline these factors as:

> (1) broadly shared norms and values; (2) a common identity; (3) perceptions of fairness across society; (4) a general sense of trust; (5) social reciprocity even with those of opposing ideologies; (6) bridging organisations and networks; (7) meaningful opportunities for participation in a variety of social contexts; (8) shared channels of communication and facts; and (9) an overall sense of cultural inclusion or integration. (Van Wart, McIntyre and Hall, 2023: 693)

According to Van Wart, McIntyre & Hall, (2023) the perception of being socially excluded, regardless of factual accuracy or ideological viewpoint, fosters emotions of resentment, social division or oppression, feelings of being victimised, a defensive mindset, hostility, deep partisanship, and a tendency to protect oneself. Based on the definition of social structures presented in this study, it remains uncertain whether an individual shapes the society or the society shapes the individual, especially if exclusion brings about feelings of social exclusion as profiled by Van Wart, McIntyre, and Hall (2023) above. The definition is accurate as it acknowledges the connection between an individual and society—a protestor aims to bring about change in social injustices such as the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction or the persistence of colonial structures in universities that make it difficult for students to embrace academic guidance.

On the other hand, society is a plural form of individual behaviours, habits and practices (Stets & Burke, 2003). It is important to explain adequately the definition of social structures because it forms the foundation of this study. By laying the foundation of social structures, their laws and regulations, the social class, race and education which influenced the identities of the youth of 1976 and 2015-2016, respectively, this study sets the stage for the rationale behind the youth's protest actions against the South African government.

When an identity is shared by members of a group or category, it is referred to as a collective identity (Klandermans, 2014). It becomes politically relevant when people who share that specific identity take part in political action on behalf of the collective. For instance, being a Black student is a social structure as it carries with it all that comes with that identity. The Black student may experience difficulties in society that come with the structure and said identity and s/he would be moved to join in resisting such difficulties and form part of or lead a social movement for justice like the 1976 Uprising or the 2015-2016 Fallism movement.

2.2.2. Identity

When it comes to the concept of identity, the literature demonstrates that identity development does indeed have a close correlation with social structures. The theory

of identity, according to Serpe (1987), emphasises the relationship between an individual, his/her society (social structure) and the role performance as perceived by societal norms, in other words, who the self chooses to be in each setting s/he finds herself/himself. This concept, as advanced by Serpe (1987), also integrates social structural elements into identity salience; the probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations (Stryker & Burke, 2000) by introducing social relationships, which reflect the individual's location in the social structure (Serpe, 1987). For example, a student is automatically found in the intermediate social structure of her/his institution of learning but can be morphed into the proximate social structure if s/he chooses to join a certain club or team on campus. The relationship between self and social structure is therefore central to developing an understanding of social action (Serpe, 1987) or why people choose to do what they do in the contexts in which they find themselves.

Quoting Simon's Self-Aspect Model of Identity, Hosseini (2022) presents identity as an analytic construct. This concept argues that a person's perception of self, comprises beliefs about their attributes or self-characteristics. According to Hosseini, (2022: 54), these characteristics include but are not limited to Personality traits (e.g.: extrovert); Abilities (e.g.: musician); Physical features, such as having dark skin; Behavioural characteristics, such as reading each day; Ideologies, such as being liberal; Social roles (one's profession); Language groups such as speaking Sepedi; and Group memberships, like being female. Hosseini (2022) contends that these attributes (or the integration thereof) are what distinguish individuals or make them similar, making it easier for people to collaborate with or repel from others in life. Hosseini (2022) further contends that people will either perceive or evaluate their self-aspects in several ways depending on their social settings. This study's examination of the student movements of 1976 and 2015-2016 in South Africa, therefore, focuses on the perception of the identities of youth activists and the development of their beliefs which may be rooted in their experiences as young and Black students in South Africa.

Mogoboya (2011:2) asserts that "identity is culture, the process of constructing meaning, from one's set of cultural beliefs, which transcend time and space". Mogoboya (2011) further defines culture as a shared experience in language, religion, history and society, making it systemic and generational, and corresponding with the

characterisation of social structure as defined by Merolla et al (2012). The premise of a unified identity within the African context stems from the African philosophy of Ubuntu, defined by Mogoboya (2011:48) as “an ethical, moral and religious value which emphasises empathy, sharing and co-operation”. According to Mogoboya (2011), the principle of Ubuntu fosters a communal life in which individuals are integrated into the community, sharing a unified identity in various aspects such as religion, knowledge, culture, economy, and real estate. Mogoboya (2011) therefore expresses this notion as the solution to freedom from colonial practices because Ubuntu is a salient feature unique to African people. It is the identity of Africa and therefore, Africans. Similarly, Maimela (1999: 367) describes identity in terms of Black Consciousness as “a spiritual strength of the Black people in values such as the interdependence of self and community, the expression of practical solidarity with others and the elevation of friendliness and sociability over hostile competition”. This portrayal of Black identity emphasises uniformity and solidarity in sharing one's neighbour’s suffering.

According to Fairbanks (2015), identity is a human condition of integrating the present with the past, because linking both dimensions creates the sum total of the being and is integral to the makeup of one’s identity. The researcher in this current study leans on Fairbank’s (2015) assertion to illustrate that one cannot understand the actions of Black student protestors without making sense of the history that shaped their present. This study suggests that apartheid laws, which suppressed education and the social status of the township environment, may have shaped the students of 1976. However, the students of 2015–2016 were exposed to this history through colonial and apartheid statues and ideology, which served as the foundation of their education. These two inferences are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this study.

In addition, the concept of identity essentially could refer to culture, self-identification within a social category or to the meaning that people attach to the various roles they play in society (Stryker & Burke, 2000). According to Merolla et al (2012), identities that increase in commitment also increase in identity salience because these relationships cement one’s identity in oneself. Identity, therefore, sees people as living their lives in small and specialised networks of social relationships in the art of choosing who shares a life with the identity carrier (Merolla et al*,* 2012). One can

therefore suggest that if identity is cemented by social relationships, then, protest movements can equally affirm people's identity by cementing their views within the causes they (protesters) are fighting for, as exemplified by the 1976 uprising and the 2015-2016 Fallism movement.

Identity can be defined as an individual's position in society that provides a person with a sense of belonging (Klandermans, 2014). According to Sutrisno, (2023), mainstream media plays a role in shaping identity by influencing how individuals present themselves in social interactions and by shaping social values and goals through the use of mass-produced images. Sutrisno, (2023) justifies this by asserting that the media, whether in print form or in the digital realm like social media, assists society in comprehending its own nature and the surrounding world. The researcher therefore argues that the social structure of apartheid played a crucial role in the emergence and growth of Black Consciousness among Black South African students in the 1970s. The 2015-2016 student movement was thus, a re-enactment of the 1976 movement, as students recognised a culture of isolation that resulted from apartheid policies. These two protests exemplify the concept of identity salience within a set social structure as described in the literature.

According to Atkin, Christophe, Stein, Gabriel, and Lee, (2022), race is a categorical identifier, along with ethnicity and language. In support of this assertion, Giddens (2023) states that people who have a stable sense of self-identity demonstrate a perception of continuity within themselves, which allows them effortless communication of their identity to others. This suggests that race is embedded in one's identity and therefore used as an identifier by those who possess it in their interaction with the world. They affirm their race before they affirm their occupation. The idea at this juncture is that race is a defined concept, which according to Dogan, Rosenkrantz, Wheeler and Hargons, (2021) and Atkin et al, (2022), is a belief that can be influenced by new messages from the mainstream media. This is why mainstream media has been seen as a tool that disseminates stories of identity (Mundt et al, 2018).

Race, as depicted in a particular manner in mainstream media, contributes to how audiences of that media may perceive the represented race. For instance, if Blacks

are represented as violent or uneducated, then one's understanding of Blackness can be shaped by that representation. This idea is expanded by Atkin et al, (2022), who argue that the creator of a text has the ability to depict the world in countless ways without any objective reality to determine the accuracy of the portrayal by drawing from their pre-existing beliefs, values, norms, or skills. This description situates media authors in a powerful position, as they shape their audience's perception of the world by framing and moulding their thought patterns and opinions (Von Zabern & Tulloch, 2020). This suggests that the formative identity of young activists is shaped by journalists or each other as authors of texts found in SASO Newsletters and on X.

In the context of this study, being Black is not only a social structure but also an identity – it is the submission to one's race and what it represents in society. The current study argues that race plays a significant role in determining an individual's trajectory in life. This idea is expanded by media theories and other literature, starting with the portrayal and perception of the Black race as defined by available heuristics theory. According to Carroll (1978), the available heuristics theory suggests that people assess the frequency or probability of events based on how easily they can recall or imagine relevant examples. This is because events that happen often are simpler to remember and visualise compared to events that happen infrequently. An inherent flaw of this theory lies in its lack of accuracy in interpreting information, as individuals may mistakenly attribute the experience of an event to a pre-existing belief rather than actual observation as a direct witness to the event (Caroll, 1978).

According to Schwarz, Bless, Strack, Klumpp, Rittenauer-Schaka, and Simons (1991), people mistakenly attribute the frequency of information to their personal perception of its recallability. This phenomenon also applies to the sense of familiarity one may feel towards an event, person or subject matter that is being discussed, observed or read about, which reiterates the point that one's understanding of race is shaped by that representation. Dixon (2017:3) states that mainstream media frequently portrays Black people as a destabilising force in society. This portrayal is not only observed by other communities, but also by Black people themselves, as noted by Schwarz et al (1991). Media audiences are likely to remember this suggestive image of Blackness as a representation of destruction. The theory of available heuristics is used to clarify

the construction of identity by the media, mainstream or otherwise, which is consumed in a passive manner by an attentive audience.

Pachur, Hertwig and Steinmann (2012) add that the frequency of exposure to information about an event in the media can create a misleading perception of its truthfulness. Pachur et al (2012) do this by drawing on Hertwig et al's (2005) study, which expands on the theory of available heuristics by introducing the concept of availability-by-recall. This concept entails retrieving instances of risks from one's social network or structures, such as family, friends and acquaintances to determine the prevalence of each risk based on the number of instances recalled. These messages are created by authors who express their own perspectives on the topic of Blackness to their audience, making that perception the first available heuristic when engaging with the subject matter (i.e. Black people). For the sake of clarity, if the heuristic given to students in both the 1976 and 2015-2016 movements was the persistent portrayal of Black individuals as uneducated and lacking the ability to govern themselves, then, the media audience's perception (availability-on-recall) of Blackness would be represented by the incapacity to engage in self-governance.

For Grills (2015), receiving new information holds psychological importance as it has the ability to trigger cognitive dissonance, leading individuals to perceive the world from fresh perspectives. Grills (2015) argues that the key to achieving full freedom and a re-imagined future for Black people lies in attaining psychological and emotional liberation from the societal narrative imposed on them, which will lead to a profound transformation of the way they perceive and define their own identity. This assertion holds true for both the youths of 1976 and of 2015-2016, who were portrayed as threatening and alarming by their respective news media.

However, this study argues that SASO Newsletters and X had the effect of offering the youth of 1976 and 2015-2016 a fresh perspective (heuristic) on their own identities and self-perception.

2.2.2.1 Identity and media framing

The media theory of framing emphasises the role of media interaction in identity formation. According to Ardèvol-Abreu (2015), framing is the process of giving some aspects of reality more emphasis or importance at the expense of others. Estupinan

(2017) supports this view, asserting that framing entails focusing on specific elements of a perceived reality. In the context of mainstream media, the act or practice of framing is to magnify a feature of reality and give it prominence in society. Mainstream media's work ultimately helps its audience make sense of the world by presenting an interpretation of reality from its own perspective and framework, thereby shaping the audience's overall perception of the world.

According to Tyali (2020), during the apartheid era, newspapers played a crucial role in promoting the existing system of apartheid in South Africa through propaganda. Fitzmaurice (2018: 64) defines propaganda as "an organisation, scheme, or movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine or practice used as an instrument of control." In 1976, the National Party depicted protesting students as "marauding mobs and looters" and described protesters and strikers as "intimidators, saboteurs, and murderers" (Bird & Garda, 1996: 4). The media sanctioned by the apartheid government used terminology such as "*tsotsi*" and "drunken rioters" to perpetuate the criminal image of young protesters (Bird & Garda, 1996: 4).

Framing has two broad foundations (Borah, 2011: 247), namely sociological (frames in communication) and psychological (emotions). Borah (2011) posits that the subconscious decision-making process profiled by the available heuristics theory rests on the information dictated to society through social structures, leading to the perpetual development of a person's identity. This study therefore defines framing as a method by which media users establish their identity or beliefs through the information presented to them. In the absence of positive media representation of Black students, alternative media such as SASO Newsletters and X emerged as disseminators of Black ideology and identity to students.

This study contends that Black students required a platform that framed and presented alternative messages to those in mainstream media. Like Tyali's (2020) position about the creation of Radio Freedom in 1963 by the ANC to speak secretly to its members and take charge of its own narrative in the process, the emergence of SASO Newsletters and X is viewed as a means for writers to control the narrative about Black identity and communicate it to their intended audience.

2.2.3. Contextualising Black Consciousness

According to Woodson (1993) and Mbembe (2017), slave-owners socialised their slaves to hate other slaves as a tool to divide them and turn them against each other to avoid being subjected to any member of their race. Slave-owners employed this strategy to stifle Black leadership and prevent them from standing up to their oppressors. It fostered an environment in which Black people could not trust each other. This study employs this historical illustration from the era of slavery to propose that the methods employed to manipulate African slaves may have also been employed on Black individuals in South Africa. The above example provides the origin discussion for the philosophy of Black Consciousness.

However, one cannot define and understand Black Consciousness, identity and social movement participation without first looking at its key identifiers, the people that shaped the transitioning ideologies around the Black identity.

Marcus Garvey, a prominent African American activist, founded the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 to unite African Americans by promoting economic, political and cultural freedom (Leeuwen, 2000). He viewed media as a form of racist education, reinforcing the narrative of a simple-minded, submissive and inferior Black person (Colin, 1989: 129) and combatted this by establishing the “Negro World” magazine. **Malcom X**, another African American activist, played a significant role in shaping the identity of African Americans during the 1950s and 1960s political protests (Terrill, 2001).

Dr. Martin Luther King Junior, a leader of the Civil Rights Movement, used his incarceration to address the plight of African Americans under Jim Crow policies (Davis, 1991). His "Letter from Birmingham Jail" reinforced the shared identity of African Americans and their labour without wages to profit America (Miller, 2013). He believed in protest as a language of the unheard (Gazette, 2020) and used political conscientisation to protest against injustices informed by race.

The development and influence of these American figures are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Patrice Lumumba, a Congolese leader, advocated for Pan African Nationalism and a free, objective press, reinvigorating the Black Freedom Movement in both America and Africa (Did’ho, 2021).

Frantz Fanon, a prominent figure in the history of decolonisation, defined decolonisation as a process of political, economic and psychological liberation (Gibson, 2011). He emphasised the struggle for identity in a white society and the need to "free the mind of the African" to free the individual, that is, the Black person's struggle for identity in a white society, comparing them to a state of helplessness and seeking a "*demiurge*" to rescue them (Gibson, 2011: 41).

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, founder of the Pan Africanist Congress, embraced African nationalism to fight white rule and destroy white supremacy (Lebakeng, 2018). He rejected collaboration with sympathetic whites and sought multiracial cooperation, believing it would increase African dependence on whites and destroy African confidence in their own strength (Graybill, 1991).

Stephen Biko was the co-founder of the Black Consciousness Movement as well as the first president and founder of the Black People's Convention (Vincent, 2007). His legacy was reflected in the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), which sought to empower and unite all minority groups through an ideology of liberation (Esterhuizen, 2015).

These activists employed various strategies for radical change and reform such as widespread education, class conflict, non-racialism, radical decolonisation, Black Consciousness and Pan-Africanism.

Hirschman (1990) states that Black Consciousness was formed as a result of apartheid's isolation of Black students in university colleges because these structures allowed the students to discuss their resentment and frustrations about their inferior education. According to Maimela (1999), Black students in at these university colleges identified themselves through the lens of Black Consciousness, which led them to form the South African Student Organisation (SASO), an exclusive society for Black students who upheld the principles of Black Consciousness. The newfound identity brought about a new framework within the Black student community.

Gibson (2011:67) defines Black Consciousness as “a practical method of cultivating critical thinking and intellectual development”. Biko (2017: 57), on the other hand, defines it as a “philosophical framework aimed at rectifying incorrect assumptions about Black culture, education, religion and economics”. Biko contends that achieving this goal (rectifying incorrect assumptions) involves implementing strategies that

enable individuals of the Black race to assume the highest level of authority, rather than depending on others to interpret their actions or plans for self-autonomy (Biko, 2017).

Black Consciousness became a movement which, according to Professor Ashwin Desai, began and rose in Durban in 1969 as a feeling of understanding and a desire for justice (SABC, 2019). The movement carried the ideology of justice and fairness for Black people while defining the identity of Blackness to its followers. According to Biko, who was one of its co-founders, the negative effects of oppression at the inception of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) were that colonialism not only subjugated a people and erased their cultural identity through distorted education, but it also distorted their historical narrative (Biko, 2017). Given that apartheid mainstream media consistently propagated a negative and oppressive depiction of Black individuals (Dixon, 2017), it became imperative for Black audiences to seek an alternative platform and outlet that would portray their image in a positive manner.

Pityana (2012), another co-founder of Black Consciousness, implies that Black Consciousness emerged from an exploration of human experience and students posing unanswerable questions to authority figures. Pityana (2012) also asserts that Black Consciousness drew theoretical inspiration from various sources, including the civil rights movement, from Frantz Fanon's writings and from African cultural practices. This is supported by the film Uprise! (Khanyile, 2017), which adds that Black Consciousness's founders dedicated themselves to listening to speeches by Malcom X and Martin Luther King Jr. recorded on Long Players. The film also adds that the main aim of Black Consciousness was to "*make Black people proud of themselves and their colour, instead of trying to be white, which was physically impossible and mentally frustrating*" (Khanyile, 2017: 5:33).

This study therefore, argues that the Black Consciousness philosophy was centred on returning the African natives to their roots of ubuntu, defined by Mpungose (2016: 8) as the "African philosophy that unearths the voice and values of the voiceless from the past to be heard and recognised by present and future generations". This definition also affirms the foundational values and history of the Black population, focusing on the core values and on what it means to be African. According to Gibson (2011), Biko

saw the Black Consciousness Movement as a practical education of thought and intellectual development. Biko (2017: 57) himself wrote that:

> Black Consciousness [seeks to] correct false images of ourselves in terms of Culture, Education, Religion, Economics. We must work out schemes not only to correct this but also to be our own authorities rather than to wait and be interpreted by others.

Biko (2017: 116) explained why members of the Black Consciousness Movement chose the word *Black* over brown: “The word Black has been used in the context of [darkness], our aim [as the Black Consciousness Movement] is to choose it for reference to us and elevate it to a position where we can look upon ourselves positively”. This statement suggests that the first point of call for the Black Consciousness Movement was not to run away from their *Black* identity but to embrace it and redefine it as something positive.

Mbembe (2017) notes that Black Consciousness developed from a historical context of displacement, resulting in a mental state in which national (South African) identity during apartheid was disregarded. This suggests that the mindset of Black people in South Africa perceived their skin colour as a disadvantage and that their efforts to improve their situation were futile. Mpungose (2016) asserts that members of the Black Consciousness Movement saw accepting the racial control and identification promoted by apartheid mainstream media as a display of self-hatred and as something that they wanted to resist and reject. Mpungose (2016) further contends that the philosophy of Black Consciousness had to do with correcting false images of Blackness, which warranted a collective action against the apartheid system. Mpungose’s (2016) sentiment is supported by Arnold (2017) who states that the basis of Black Consciousness was for Black people to reject all value systems that sought to make them foreigners in the country of their birth and reduce their human dignity.

Mpungose (2016) argues that understanding one's obligations necessitates self-awareness and achieving self-sentience often involves determining one's responsibilities. This idea echoes Biko’s thoughts on the evolution of culture being tied to the discovery of identity, thus, repeating the vision of the African philosophy of ubuntu—a unity of mind, soul and character by those seeking to change the status quo of segregation and apartheid (Biko, 2017). Biko’s mission was to redefine the identity of the meaning attributed to “Black”, a colour that denotes evil, darkness and fear, which influenced the desire for the Black person to aspire towards whiteness

(Sono, 1971; Gibson, 2011; Khanyile, 2017). The philosophy portrayed in Biko's writing thus transformed the term Black into a symbol of beauty and pride, a sign of radical defiance and a call to revolt (Mbembe, 2017).

For Hirschmann (1990) and Postma (2016), the philosophy of Black Consciousness was established within Black-only College-Universities that were intended to segregate and regulate Black higher education. They state that these institutions served as gathering places for African intellectuals to reflect collectively and reassess their perspectives as Black individuals. Students of the University of the North (now knows as the University of Limpopo) established the South African Students Organisation (SASO) in 1969, which according to Hirschmann (1990) and Postma (2016) played a significant role in shaping and defining African concepts, primarily, through its publication, the SASO Newsletter.

Esterhuizen (2015) notes that South African history has often been viewed through a single lens (frame), with white intellectuals perpetuating white supremacy and disregarding the impact of colonialism and apartheid on Black South Africans. This study therefore contends that the above frame played a role in the emergence of Black Consciousness, leading to a demand to emphasise and redefine Black identity. Maimela (1999) notes that students in 1976 viewed Black Consciousness as a unifying philosophy and as an alternative approach to combating apartheid. This study aims to support this concept as a definition of Black solidarity and as the basis for the pursuit of justice. The study's interpretation of this literature is that the development of an identity prompts individuals to adopt a new heuristic about themselves, which influences how they perceive their own lives. The process anchors them in an established cultural framework and enhances their awareness of their own identity. This interpretation can be observed in the youth of both 1976 and 2015-2016, who were motivated to preserve their developed identities.

The above assertion is supported by Mpofu (2017: 353) who states that the Fallist movement was "anchored on the … ideology of the Bikoist and Fanonian Black Consciousness… to decolonise knowledge, curriculum and faculty through the teaching of material from black thinkers… and to fight for free quality education".

Ahmed’s (2019) study supports this argument as it examined the 2015 RhodesMustFall student movement. His study identifies a common characteristic among the student activists, which they referred to as "Black pain". Individuals used this term to describe the genuine suffering they experienced during the movement. The experience of Black pain played a significant role in shaping the students' sense of identity. Collectively, they observed a shared sense of marginalisation by the University of Cape Town's structures, emphasising their exclusion from the institution's historical narrative.

Furthermore, Mudavanhu (2017:23) introduces the concept of "othering", summarising it as “the creation of a superior self in contrast to an inferior other”. This concept is explored before Ahmed's profile of Black pain and alienation in his work. Mudavanhu (2017) portrays the superior self as a member of an in-group, while the inferior other belongs to an out-group. The Black students' awareness of their Black identity created a sense of separation from students of different races, as their shared experience of pain, distinctive to their Blackness, resulted from centuries of colonial dominance. Mudavanhu (2017) asserts that the powerful concept of othering deprives the Other of essential qualities shared by the in-group, such as reason, dignity, love, pride, heroism, and human rights. The Other may experience segregation from a larger social structure due to this phenomenon, leading to cognitive dissonance and the realisation of the need to protest against structures of power and influence as the students of 1976 and 2015-2016 did. This study therefore, asserts that the students of 2015-2016 stood together in protest, because they were united by their Blackness. This study also positions Black Consciousness as a response to how mainstream media portrayed race/Blackness.

This study, so far, has conducted a thorough analysis of existing literature on the development of identity and social structure. It also establishes a correlation between the recognition of one's identity and its influence on inciting an uprising by analysing the evolution of leaders in liberation movements from 1914 to 1976, which ultimately led to the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa.

2.2.4. Media as concept and the expression of Black identity

The term media can be defined as platforms in which various players such as news media can play a role in educating and entertaining the public (Morris & Ogan, 2018).

Salaudeen, Onyechi & Topic (2020) point out that mainstream media, including newspapers, magazines, radio and television, were the primary means of distributing information and mass-mediated messages with content produced solely by trained professional journalists. This exclusive access to content production came to an end with the introduction of new media technologies such as X. Therefore, this study argues that the introduction of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) Newsletter in 1970 was a novel concept and should be classified as a form of new media during the 1970s due to its content deviating from mainstream media, similar to how X is classified today. The newsletter was produced by SASO members with the aim of spreading its message to students throughout South Africa (Naidoo, 2015). Furthermore, its authors were not necessarily experts in the field, but university students expressing their perspectives on society.

Rauch (2015) defines this novel approach to mainstream media as alternative media, noting that its audience appreciates its content because it offers information that is frequently overlooked and socially provocative or diverse in contrast to the content provided by mainstream media. According to Atton (2008), alternative media empowers its readers and allows them to tell their own stories, even without the formal education typically required by mainstream media. This provides fluidity to reporting or narrating stories to a specific audience without the restrictions of mainstream media. Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) view the concept of alternative media as both participatory and critical. It is participatory in that the subjects or people contained in the media participate in the message, and it is critical primarily because it focuses on challenging the views represented by mainstream media (Sandoval & Fuchs, 2010).

According to the above definitions, the structure, formation and ethos of SASO served as an alternative media for the dissemination of the Black Consciousness ideology. SASO defined Black Consciousness as "*an attitude of mind and a way of life*" (SASO Newsletter, September 1971:14), which advances Pityana (1971) on the promotion of a value system within the Black community, encouraging individuals to define themselves on their own terms rather than accepting external definitions (Pityana, 1971).

It would therefore be difficult to imagine that the content of SASO Newsletters, as a new media, did not influence its readers by providing an alternative to mainstream

media views. This study therefore, argues that this experience would have caused cognitive dissonance in SASO readers, as suggested by Grills (2015), leading to new perspectives on self-perception. The philosophy of Black Consciousness as profiled in SASO Newsletters, bestowed a fresh significance on the term Black. It suggested that the concept of "Blackness" was imposed on the Black community, as if it were a garment that someone else put on them, with the intention of confining them within its boundaries (Mbambo 2017). When examining Biko's writings, it becomes evident that he urged his audience to relinquish their comfort and security as one would remove one's coat (Biko, 2017).

Maseremule (2015) asserts that the students who participated in the Fallism movement of 2015-2016 also studied Black Consciousness literature actively and questioned the concept of freedom by recognising the underlying principles of the colonial social structure imposed by apartheid. The objective of the students of 2015-2016, was to revive Black pride by acquiring knowledge of sound principles from literature on Black Consciousness (Maseremule, 2015). Fallism in 2015-2016 saw a resurgence of Black Consciousness and Pan Africanism through digital or new information technologies, which according to Van Laer (2011), increases activism. Mokonehatse (2018) concurs with the influence of digital technologies by stating that the Fallism campaign, specifically #RhodesMustFall, on X (formerly Twitter) presented new organisational and mobilising methods in student protests in South Africa. As alternative media, X did not only provide its audiences with 160-character messages (tweets), but used links that led to newspaper articles, audio and visual clips to communicate its message, making it a central feature to student participation in the movement. This was made possible by the use of a hashtag—a sign to organise information and to assign meaning to a tweet (Frassinelli, 2018). This activity reinforces Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) view of alternative media as both participatory and critical.

Alternative media is regarded as the driver of protest movements in the 2010s (Hodes, 2016; Bosch, 2016; Mudavanhu, 2017; Frassinelli 2018; Mokonehatse, 2018). Mare (2014) defines social media as the 'new protest drum' because it is a platform that creatively conveys the indignation and discontent of protestors. Therefore, social media provides protestors with the opportunity to bypass mainstream media controls,

thus disempowering official state propaganda while passing on messages of solidarity to social media audiences (Mare, 2014).

According to Mokonehatse (2018), social media users use this platform to interact with each other through videos, images, and texts, fostering strong relationships and overcoming geographical limitations. Social media offers immediacy, accessibility and additional features such as retweets and hashtags, which enhance the user's personal experience on these platforms. Hodes (2016) states that the Fallism movement experienced increased participation due to the rapid spread of content on social media, which contributed to the reinforcement of the group's collective identity. The sharing involved the dissemination of photos and videos that effectively conveyed a sense of rapid organisation and escalation, thereby, creating a strong feeling of immediacy and urgency (Hodes, 2016). Bosch (2016) presents the #RMF hashtag as a central tool for debating the change demanded by the University of Cape Town's students to Africanise the university's curriculum. Therefore, social media enables young people today to participate in protest movements by granting them convenient access to a vast network of connections (Bosch, 2016; Hodes, 2016).

Dollarhide (2023) provides a concise definition of social media as digital technology that enables the exchange of ideas and information created by users, to encourage interaction through activities such as liking, sharing, commenting and discussing. Lutkevich (2023) adds that the main focus of these networks generally centres on the users and their profiles, which allow participants to connect with other users who have similar interests or concerns (Lutkevich, 2023). Bosch (2016) notes that the "hashtag" served as a focal point for discussions among students in 2015-2016, attracting participants from both local and national levels to engage in online conversations. This ensured that individuals who had the ability to use social media platforms like X were able to view and understand the thoughts and motivations behind the protest.

Masombuka (2023) offers a different perspective on communication, stating that students at the University of the Witwatersrand used face-to-face meetings and physical blockades in 2015 to prevent others from entering the campus. She states that "the decision to occupy and shut down (the university) made it possible for students to hold captive the brutality of the status quo and to imagine the university of their dreams" (Masombuka, 2023: 47). This highlights a different mode of

communication in the 2015-2016 movement distinct from those presented by Hodes (2016), Bosch (2016), Mudavanhu (2017), Frassinelli (2018), and Mokonehatse (2018). Masombuka (2023: 48) therefore argues that ignoring other forms of protest communication may lead to a disregard of "solid foundations that are necessary in building up a movement". This form of communication can also be perceived as alternative media because the students used a medium that deviated from mainstream media's norms and standards.

The above literature shows that the youth groups of 1976 and 2015-2016 played an active role in challenging and transforming the prevailing perceptions (available heuristic) and stereotypes about their racial identity by taking action based on the information they acquired from the alternative media at their disposal. By using this knowledge, they bypassed the frameworks that the mainstream media employed to categorise or portray them negatively in society. These identified media streams, specifically SASO Newsletters and X, were used to articulate Black identity within the framework of the Black Consciousness Movement (Naidoo, 2015).

Therefore, to summarise and reflect on McLuhan's (2003) perspective that the medium itself is the message and has a substantial impact on human interaction and behaviour, this study, expands on this notion by concluding that the message and theory of Black Consciousness were also a type of medium (media) and frame that offered diverse and liberating content for its audience.

2.2.5. Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive Dissonance is an approach used to understand human psychology, communication and social influence (Yahya & Sukmayadi, 2020). It is a continuation of W.E.B. du Bois' 1903 theory of double-consciousness, which described the dual identity of African Americans in a predominantly white-centred world (Smith, 2021). According to Meer (2019), double consciousness was based on the paradoxical theme of duality in African American life that was driven primarily by racism. This is supported by Smith (2021) who adds that Du Bois defined double consciousness as the *"sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on with amused contempt and pity.*" These definitions suggest that double-consciousness was established by media influence which served as the veil through which the Black identity was defined and communicated to a white

audience. While the definitions by Meer (2019) and Smith (2021) focus on the American experience, this study draws a comparison with the South African Black population, specifically the students of 1976 and 2015-2016 who are the focus of this study. This study therefore presents the cognitive dissonance of the South African Black population, specifically the students of 1976 and 2015-2016, who were presented media messages that excluded them from the culture of their education.

As noted by Harmon-Jones and Mills (2019), cognitive dissonance happens when new information contradicts people's existing beliefs, values and ideas, leading them to actively reconcile or come to terms with it, particularly in decision-making and problem-solving. Harmon-Jones and Mills (2019) further state that the presence of cognitive dissonance, which induces psychological discomfort, acts as a motivating factor for individuals to ease its presence by prompting them to avoid information that is likely to contribute to it. This study suggests that students in 1976 and 2015-2016 may have deliberately avoided interacting with information that reinforced negative stereotypes about their Black identity and that they preferred to engage with alternative media channels that celebrated and promoted a positive image of them. The current study further suggests that the conflicting information presented about them in mainstream media may have created cognitive dissonance in students as they aspired to perceive themselves in a different manner. Expressing their discontent with the portrayal of their identity or race in mainstream media may have formed part of their combat or resistance to this dissonance.

Cooper (2019) confirms that a shift in perspective towards the phenomenon that causes discomfort is one way to lessen the inconsistency presented by discord. Holding two or more inconsistent cognitions causes the state of cognitive dissonance, which is experienced as uncomfortable tension (Cooper, 2019). Joseph and Golash-Boza (2021) extend this argument by stating that the increase in protest movements among society's marginalised groups indicates a sense of agency resulting from their double consciousness. The tension and agency (Cooper, 2019; Joseph & Golash-Boza, 2021) as well as the media's heuristic about Black identity within the social structure of education may have led individuals or students in this study to express their dissatisfaction to the state in order to find an escape from their perceived reality enforced by institutions of learning. This point is also advanced by Dr Lushaba in "The Hustlers Corner SA" (2023), who states that the acceptance of a westernised

education is the acceptance of colonial domination of the mind because the education system was used as a tool to displace indigenous knowledge through force and display of power by the west.

Lushaba argues that students experience cognitive dissonance when their inclination to learn conflicts with their inclination to reject colonial approaches to education. He asserts that the European method of control was facilitated by their intellectual dominance, which he defines as *epistemological domination*, achieved through education and the introduction of new values (The Hustlers Corner SA, 2023). This ideology positions its proponent as a *demiurge* to those who learn and embrace it (Cf. Gibson, 2011). Drew (2023) defines the resolution of this confusion and ideological conflict as cognitive equilibrium in which the person is at peace within him/herself.

Therefore, this study examines the idea that resistance against imposed constructs of identity development, enforced by influential structures such as media institutions or the state, can lead to social change. Mpofu (2017: 359) notes that there is a necessary form of defiance required by the marginalised to disrupt, upset and interrupt "the imagined normal society to attempt to find redress". Specifically, the imposition of Afrikaans in 1976, the symbolism of the Rhodes Statue in 2015 and the fight for free quality education in 2015-2016 by students. This literature review thus addresses the above assertion by providing insights into identity development, the establishment of alternative media platforms and the manifestation of a new identity through protest movements.

2.3 Media and protest movements

2.3.1 Protest movements

According to Van Laer (2011), individuals engage in protest movements due to instrumental motives, collective identity and ideological beliefs. Postma (2016) profiles a different approach to Van Laer (2011) by stressing that protest movements are marked by two distinct aspirations—the aspiration to break free from constraints and the aspiration to actively seek out opportunities for personal growth and empowerment. This study interprets the aspiration to break free from constraints alluded to by Postma (2016) as the decision to oppose Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in 1976 and the decision to oppose a colonial and expensive education

system in 2015-2016. Greef, Mostert, Kahl, and Jonker (2021) assert that the concept of social injustice refers to the violation of human rights in terms of fair access to opportunities and attempts to address historical injustices.

Greef et al (2021) integrate the arguments presented by Postma (2016) and Van Laer (2011) and clarify that individuals engage in protests after recognising an injustice within their social environment. Liberty serves as a fresh theme that connects the two desires, thereby, introducing a distinct perspective to the previously explored concepts of group identity, framing, conscientisation and self-expression. Postma (2016) asserts that protest movements are meaningless unless they contribute to the establishment of freedom or bring about essential changes in human life conditions in order to achieve freedom.

The literature indicates that people engage in protests within a structured framework to garner support for a cause, establish a sense of group identity, promote political awareness and gain self-expression (Walgrave, Van Laer, Verhulst and Wouters, 2010; Larmer, 2010; Van Laer, 2011; Giddens, 2023).

Mare (2014) states that protest movements within the Southern African region lean more on political, economic and social rights activation compared to other regions in Africa.

Nkuna (2016) depicts protest movements in South Africa as having anti-colonial roots, stemming from the Dutch invasion of South Africa in 1652 and leading up to the country's non-racial democratic elections in 1994. She describes these protests as primarily non-violent, taking the form of marches, petitions, boycotts and campaigns and demonstrating the long history of South Africa's protest culture. This is because South Africans have consistently fought for justice and fairness, particularly through service delivery protests, which she suggests may be a continuation of apartheid protest movements (Nkuna, 2016).

Mpofu (2017) asserts that violence can carry both positive and negative connotations against a system that protestors deem dangerous to their existence. He (Mpofu) describes protests as disruptions, stating that they can be upsetting, disturbing, and interrupting social norms, but that they are necessary to find solutions to the problems faced by the marginalised (Mpofu, 2017).

According to Wasserman, Bosch, and Chuma (2018), protests serve as a means of communication from below, aiming to achieve greater social transformation and inclusion. In other words, they amplify the voices of the marginalised, who are often at the bottom of the social hierarchy, by disrupting social norms and serving as an outlet for their frustration.

Ahmed (2019), on the other hand, defines protests as a network comprising individuals who establish mental connections with others based on an emotional reaction to a core injustice, leading to collective action. Ahmed (2019) further outlines three dimensions of protest involvement—the recognition of shared identities (identifying with a cause), the presence of adversaries (the target of the protest) and the action taken to challenge the system and bring about change (the protest itself). Ahmed (2019) connects identity development with participation in protest movements.

Van Laer (2011) and Ahmed (2019) claim that people protest because of a rewarding sense of collective identity within a group, wherein they find a cause.

According to Loya and McLeod (2020), social protest is a form of political expression that seeks to bring about social or political change by influencing the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of the public or the policies of an organisation or institution. This definition is key to the next discussion on media and protests because it suggests that protesters seek to influence public views about the cause for which they are advocating. This perspective aligns with the function of media coverage of protest movements, implying a mutually beneficial partnership to shape public opinion.

2.3.2 Media and protest

According to Boyle and Schmierbach (2009), the use of media by protesters offers them power to influence political involvement among media audiences. The authors base their assertion on the uses and gratifications theory, which highlights that people use media channels, particularly news or mainstream media, to fulfil their need for information, while other media channels, such as entertainment, are used to meet different needs of media consumers (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2009). Their assertion is that using mainstream media can encourage public participation in political involvement such as protest movements, while using entertainment and other forms

of media may hinder the same activity among media users (Boyle & Schmierbach, 2009).

On the other hand, Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes (2014) highlight the idea that mainstream media has an indirect influence in fostering attitudes and resources, such as trust and emotions, which encourage participation in protest movements. However, they also state that protest movements receive less media coverage compared to institutional politics, which impedes the dissemination of information to potential participants because the media provides less mobilising information for potential participants. According to Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes (2014), protest events receive low levels of coverage, whereas mainstream media often portrays electoral politics in a positive light, which may not necessarily benefit protest movements because political discourses overshadow them. This implies that the mainstream media favours political activities that enhance the image of democracy, like voting, over those that challenge it, like protest movements, which are a more profound discontent with the fruits of democracy and should be considered an essential aspect of democratic expression (Wasserman et al, 2018). Even when protest movements attract the attention of mainstream media, the portrayal of these protests in media reports can sometimes undermine their goals by portraying them negatively (Corrigall-Brown & Wilkes, 2014). This discussion raises the question of whether the media prioritises the protection of the state or the concept of democracy by presenting a favourable image of democracy that may not align with the reality presented by protest movements.

Lee (2014) contends that the connection between protest movements and the media is intricate in terms of how the mainstream media portray these movements. Protest movements express their ideas within a conceptual environment and use media to promote their cause (Lee, 2014). Lee (2014) also identifies the advantages of technology in protest movements, asserting that mainstream media is no longer the sole means for protesters to communicate with the public. Furthermore, alternative media facilitated by the internet and social media networks serve as a means for protesters to reach their audience directly, bypassing the need for mainstream media platforms. However, Lee (2014) contends that despite protesters having access to social media, mainstream media maintain significant influence in shaping agendas, reaching a broader range of people and bestowing status and credibility.

According to Hoffman and Pompper (2020), mainstream media adheres to a set of criteria known as news values, which include factors such as audience appeal, impact, proximity, timeliness, prominence, unusualness and conflict. They note that journalists make decisions about the news value of a potential story based on these values while also considering the story's competitiveness (Hoffman & Pompper, 2020). This portrays journalists as information gatekeepers, empowered to determine the topics they wish to inform their audience about. It also suggests that they are in a position to frame the story according to profitability (competitiveness) for the sake of the media house. Wasserman et al, (2018) support the above assertion by stating that institutional requirements often pose challenges for journalists, resulting in poor coverage of news stories. These challenges include limited word count (per article), deadlines, and time pressures to file stories on a daily basis without having enough time for engaged research.

Brown and Mourão (2022) present an alternative view to Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes (2014), but one that supports Hoffman and Pompper (2020). They state that protest movements play a crucial role in democracy as they allow citizens to exercise their right to request the government for solutions to their grievances (Brown & Mourão, 2022). Their view of mainstream media is that it is a crucial platform for public awareness of protest movements and that journalists often report on the increased disruptiveness of these movements due to their alignment with traditional newsworthiness indicators (Hoffman & Pompper, 2020). Brown and Mourão (2022) argue that the depictions of political views regarding a protest movement in mainstream media influence how audiences understand the protests being reported. Thus, implying that political ideologies influence media reporting on protest movements. They further assert that protest movements face difficulties in attaining public or mainstream media exposure without engaging in collective action (Brown & Mourão, 2022). This view brings to light Kladerman's (2014) view of collective identity, discussed in Section 2.2.1.

According to David (2022), in protest movements the media is a social tool for shaping public opinion, including how the public perceives support for a particular cause. Thus, protest movements entail social behaviour and political engagement working in tandem with mainstream media discourses (David, 2022). This view positions mainstream media as facilitators and influencers of public opinion about protest

movements. David's (2022) analysis emphasises the concept of the protest paradigm, which entails framing protesters as destructive or marginalised. He asserts that the level of media attention protest movements receive significantly influences them, as this attention plays a crucial role in transforming an individual's personal views into public opinion, provided that the media gives such opinions prominence (David, 2022). Wasserman et al, (2018) offer a localised description of South African mainstream media, as one “driven by commercial imperatives and dominated by elite perspectives”. This in turn makes South African media coverage biased as communication ‘from above’ (by the elite) to the public ‘below’ (the marginalised) (Wasserman et al, 2018). This underscores Pachur et al's (2012) concept of media saliency noted in Section 2.2.2, as increased exposure to a particular idea that leads to its perceived truth.

In alignment with the above scholars, Lee and Ahmed (2023) argue that mainstream media frequently disregards protest events or seeks to diminish their significance through a "protest paradigm" that marginalises protesters or protest movements. For Lee (2014), the protest paradigm refers to the media's tendency to depict protest movements as bizarre, menacing or ineffective.

Like Lee (2014), Lee and Ahmed (2023) propose the idea of using social media as a substitute platform to challenge the traditional protest paradigm in mainstream media. They argue that protesters, including activists, can take advantage of social media to bypass the traditional media gatekeepers and independently create and share their own content (Lee & Ahmed, 2023). According to Lee and Ahmed (2023), social media has radically altered the way people become aware of and participate in protest movements. This, they say, is because social media platforms provide a means for gathering information and news, which in turn becomes the foundation for engaging in protests.

Like David (2022), Lee and Ahmed (2023) support the idea that the creation of digital and social media has enhanced the availability of news and developed a more enlightened society.

2.4 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that social change takes place when the techniques and channels used to manipulate a group's identity are exposed or modified.

It explored the significance of alternative media as a remedy to the information conveyed by mainstream media, which is often influenced by media producers who hold their own perspectives on a reported subject matter. Alternative media such as SASO Newsletters, word of mouth and X offer different perspectives to media consumers, allowing them to perceive themselves in a new light and question the way they are depicted by mainstream media's biases and perspectives. Alternative media leads to the resolution of cognitive dissonance experienced by the mainstream media's targeted audience, as it offers them fresh ideas to construct an identity that aligns with their values and makes it possible for them to relate to its content. Existing literature has shown that dissatisfaction with social structures such as media organisations and educational institutions and their inherent bias against protesters is the primary motivating factor for individuals to participate in protests. It is clear from the literature that alternative media is a platform and a source of empowerment for people who have historically faced barriers to self-expression or articulation about their concerns. It amplifies the untold stories and the unheard voices in mainstream media.

This chapter focused on the complexity of social structures as multi-dimensional concepts that shape the development of one's identity. It also explored how identity is influenced by various factors, such as media frames and the prevailing heuristics associated with a particular group that is the centre of attention in mainstream media. Lastly, the philosophy and theory of Black Consciousness emerged as a response to the biased depiction of Black individuals in mainstream media. It empowered its adherents to perceive themselves in a manner that contradicted the negative labels imposed on them by their detractors. The literature suggests that Black Consciousness is an act of defiance and disruption to the sustained and age-old perception of Blackness carried and reported through various media. The researcher therefore asserts that it is the Trojan horse of social change within Black communities because, it carries with it the necessary tools required to break the stigma of Blackness. Simply put, it is reparation, restoration and reconstruction of Black identity.

The current study therefore provides additional insight and new perspectives into the two movements under study namely the 1976 Soweto uprising and the 2015-2016 Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movement, which used alternative media to promote their objectives.

The next chapter will investigate the historical context of South Africa, specifically focusing on the emergence of apartheid as a driving force behind the development of Black Consciousness, which in turn sparked the 1976 and the 2015-2016 student movements.

CHAPTER THREE:

CONTEXTUALISATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY AND STUDENT MOVEMENTS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the historic events surrounding student uprisings in South Africa. It explains the historical context of South Africa's identity as well as the politics that led to the acts that changed the trajectory of the country's societal norms. This thought will be explored by considering Afrikaner history as a precursor to apartheid, its policies and its relation to Black Consciousness in South African social movements. The chapter also examines the introduction of Black Consciousness in Black communities, how it spread and how it led to the 1976 student uprising. The current chapter also provides a brief overview of the fall of apartheid, the introduction of democracy and the ongoing efforts to address the legacy of apartheid policies. It culminates with the 2015-2016 student movement and how the 1976 uprising may have contributed to it.

Origin of race and definition of “Blackness”

Biewen (2019) makes an observation about the Portuguese chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara, whom he credits with creating “The Lie That Invented Racism." Biewen (2019) relates that King Afonso V of Portugal commissioned Zurara in 1456 to write a report in which he describes Africans as "a distinct group of inferior and beastly" people (Biewen, 2019, 10:01). Biewen explains that this king, under whose authority the slave trade gained traction, was responsible for creating a narrative and frame that helped justify the "new trade."

According to Biewen (2019), Zurara invented the notions of “Blackness” and "whiteness,” stating that “Blackness has no meaning without whiteness” (Biewen, 2019, 11:19; see also Mpungose 2016). Other European countries soon followed this narrative, while the Portuguese led the movement and thus began the era of colonisation and perhaps even white supremacy.

He concludes that racism did not start with a misunderstanding but rather with a lie (Biewen, 2019), sustained by the notion that the “Black man was incapable of emancipating himself from ‘his’ bestiality and therefore trapped in a lesser form of

being” (Mbembe 2017: 27). Race, therefore, according to Biewen (2019, 13:13), is “a story told to justify the ruthless mistreatment of other human beings for income”.

This profile provides the historical background and development of Blackness as well as its impact on apartheid South Africa, which is discussed in the following sections.

3.2 Afrikaner identity—Assumed catalyst of Black Consciousness

According to Greef and Schlebusch (2021), the Afrikaners are descendants of Dutch, French and German immigrants who settled in South Africa during the 17th and 18th century. The genetic ancestry of the Afrikaners also includes Khoisan and Cape Malay, defined by Klader (2021) as descendants of slaves, prisoners and political exiles transported by the Dutch East India Company to the Western Cape of South Africa.

Majeke (1994) and Greef and Schlebusch (2021) affirm Klader’s (2021) assertion that Afrikaner heritage represents a blend of ancestry including European, Asian, and African origin, while Du Plessis and Grant (2019) suggest that its linguistic roots are more Khoekhoe (indigenous to Africa) than Germanic. This account is significant because the Afrikaners play a crucial role in South Africa's history, as will be demonstrated in this chapter. Majeke (1994) therefore contends that the Afrikaners could not claim to have a "pure" race, unlike their white English counterparts.

3.2.1 Brief history of the Afrikaner

Clare (2010) and Henkes (2023) write about Jan van Riebeek, a Commander of the Dutch East India Company who established a refreshment station with 125 people at the Cape on 6 April 1652. The Cape population multiplied to 3000 people by 1700 comprising settlers, servants and slaves from nations bordering the Indian Ocean such as Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Madagascar (Fourie 2020). This indicates that the Cape was an established settlement for the Dutch who in 48 years managed to secure a foothold on the African soil. According to Clare (2010: 78), it was this group that explored the interior of the country, as a “wandering tribe of farmers with an insatiable hunger for land and an utter contempt for the natives”.

Kriel (2021) explains that the concept of *boere* (farmer) was an initial identity of the Afrikaners, which later evolved into a nationalist ideology known as *Boer*. Based on Fourie’s (2020) account, this is because the Afrikaner began their settlement as

farmers but later sought to migrate from the Cape after the British Empire took over the colony in 1806 and soon abolished slavery in 1833 throughout the British Empire (Muffet, 2022). The choice to free slaves led to turmoil within the Afrikaner community, which viewed its members as a superior racial group compared to their slaves (Fourie, 2020). Müller (2019) states that, in addition to economic reasons, the Afrikaners left the colony not only in protest against the British and their equalisation policies across the British Empire, as they did not support the freedom of slaves, but also to promote a perspective that included hierarchical levels of humanity (Müller, 2019). This exit became widely known as the Great Trek (Kriel, 2021). Fourie (2020:8) cites a descendant of an Afrikaner immigrant below:

> The disgraceful and unrighteous freedom given to the slaves did not drive us away as much as the equality with us as Christians, which is contrary to God's laws and to nature. It was simply too intolerable for any decent Christian to carry such a load, which is why we would rather leave [the Cape colony] so as to preserve our faith in its pure form.

This statement suggests that the Afrikaner based their superiority on a theological concept rather than perhaps a political belief grounded on racial superiority as suggested by Fourie (2020:8) who claims that "Political and racial segregation was a leitmotif for the settlers who moved beyond the borders of the Colony from early on".

Müller (2019) notes that this migration would later solidify as a cornerstone of Afrikaner identity, receiving memorialisation as such. Surridge (2012) and Wessels (2022) state that the British and Boers would eventually go to war over the control of South African land and resources in 1899, which concluded in 1902 with the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging. The end of the war led to Afrikaner self-government in 1906, followed by the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 under a segregationist constitution with an all-white Parliament (Henkes, 2023).

Several accounts reveal the origins of the Afrikaner and their place within South Africa's topographic landscape (Clare, 2010; Fourie, 2020; Kriel, 2021; Henkes, 2023). They do not exclude the existence of African natives in it but show that they were a present feature in the Afrikaners' quest for dominion. These accounts reveal the desire of the Afrikaners to acquire land and the disdain they had for the native tribes who occupied the land they desired. From this stance, the current study notes the anthropology of the Afrikaners in their formative years and their desire to establish

themselves in a land they had appropriated to themselves. Van Wyk (2016) asserts that the war between the British and Afrikaner stimulated Afrikaner patriotism because it was a conflict between Afrikaner nationalism and British imperialism. The war was a test of the determination to rule South Africa, and the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging brought about the fulfilment of that desire (Van Wyk, 2016).

3.2.2 The Union of South Africa

In 1917, seven years after the Union of South Africa was established, General Jan Smuts, a South African war leader, proposed to a War Cabinet in London that South Africa could be a new home for Europeans seeking a fresh start after World War One (South African History Online [SAHO], 2019; Katz, 2022; Henkes, 2023). According to Courtenay (2017), this decision was meant to form peaceful relations between the Afrikaner and British.

While there and in his address to the War Cabinet in London, General Jan Smuts made the declaration:

> We have also a large section of my own people, the Dutch people in South Africa, who think that the best policy is for them to stand aside and to remain, in isolation. They think that in that way they will be better able to preserve their language, their traditions, and their national type, and that they will, in that way, not be swallowed up and be submerged by the new currents (SAHO, 2019).

General Jan Smuts' statement above suggests that he aimed to instil a feeling of optimism in his audience regarding a fresh start and equality between the British and the Afrikaner. However, South Africa as a state was always shadowed by a looming presence of Black resistance towards a white minority. History does not quite articulate the cruelty and force by which the Dutch took over much of the landscape of the southern tip of Africa (Henkes, 2023).

Clare (2010) notes that the reality of this relationship was more brutal than what historians and storytellers of the west chose to depict, while Freschi, Schmahmann, and Van Robbroeck (2019: 66) contend that media imagery in historical art represented Black folk as "barbaric savages that stood in the way of brave and heroic Boers claiming to bring civilisation to them." Henkes (2023) adds that this once celebrated Afrikaner (and Dutch) belief that the Netherlands brought civilisation and modernity to South Africa is a form of propaganda. The omission of this history (of cruelty and force) is an example of how historians framed reality by choosing what

served their mission, a phenomenon Borah (2011: 247) calls, “sociological framing”, which makes use of “words, images and phrases to sell an idea”. The previous chapter gave insight into framing as the process in which some aspects of reality are selected and given greater emphasis or importance to draw attention to certain features of reality at the expense of others by (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015; Estupinan, 2017). The risk associated with the sociological framing approach is that it is impossible to manipulate a frame without changing some facts (Borah, 2011). Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) advances Borah’s view by stating that frames [or the information within them] have the power to shape society by contributing to the perceptions, views, and behaviours of people and the public, which resonate with the concept of social structures explored in detail in the previous chapter.

It is also important to mention that the rise of Afrikaner nationalism had its roots in the 1920s and 1930s, a time that South Africa was plagued by the absence of national unity between the Afrikaner and English communities (Freschi et al, 2019; Giliomee, 2019). Furthermore, the defects in the economic structure and the racial demographic factor present at that time, contributed to the white fear that Black population growth (die swart-gevaar) would eventually determine the outcome of the English-Afrikaner power struggle (Freschi et al, 2019).

The Afrikaners were aware of the growing Black resistance against the white minority. General Jan Smuts, in his address to the War Cabinet in London, discussed the "Native Problem," which he believed hindered Europe's aspirations to establish South Africa as a predominantly white territory (Garson, 2007; SAHO, 2019; Katz, 2022). Majeke (1995) however argues that the Afrikaners lacked a homeland due to the absence of literature or tangible cultural symbols in their language, which hindered the representation of their cultural identity.

It was vital, therefore, for the Afrikaners to define themselves through language, culture and beliefs while also maintaining amicable relations with the British who had defeated them in war and posed a threat to their territory. If the Afrikaners were to establish themselves in the world, they needed to start at the beginning—their identity and language.

3.2.3 Formation of a religious ideology and identity

Giliomee (2019) highlights the historical process that shaped the Afrikaners' identity, by stating the reliance on their religion, church, language and nationality as the result of a particular historical process. This view cements the pillar of identity in the Afrikaner experience, which was a product of social or political action (Giddens, 2023). The identity needed a strong foundation that would act as evidence for the legitimisation of what the Afrikaners believed of themselves. Müller (2019) therefore argues that the Afrikaner national identity emerged as a counter to the British Empire's identity and that it manifested in the Dutch Reformed Church. He claims that this belief in divine selection influenced their religious, national and political identity (Müller, 2019).

Van Wyk (2016) contends that in the years following the South African war and the development of the Union of South Africa, Afrikaner scholars developed a theology that emphasised the concept of separate development (apartheid), which was later incorporated into the establishment of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PUCHE). Van Wyk (2016) identifies PUCHE as a significant advancement in the theological school of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) because it embraced a Calvinistic theoretical vision. Calvinism is a Protestant denomination based on John Calvin's theological traditions, focusing on predestination, salvation of an elect group and the certainty of atonement for their sins. It implies that only the sins of the elect were atoned for by the death of Jesus (Parker, 2022)

The Afrikaners adopted this theologically predestined identity and integrated it into their overall identity and immigration history from the Cape colony. Calvinist theology supported their ideology, making it legal and acceptable (Jude-Johnson, 2021), thus shaping a nationalist perspective. Kruger and van der Merwe (2017) contend that the Afrikaner worldview limited the perspective of many Afrikaners as they viewed the world through a racially privileged lens that privileged them over others. The apartheid ideology fostered a narrow perspective that restricted the perspective of the majority of Afrikaners. The ideology revolved around the concept that humanity could be classified into homogeneous racial groups that were separated based on racial divisions (Kruger & van der Merwe, 2017).

According to the interpretation of the researcher, Kruger and van der Merwer (2017) suggest that the Afrikaner worldview, influenced by predestination and religion as

stated by Van Wyk (2016), was used to justify segregation and privilege based on racial identity.

Furthermore, the religious ideology adopted by the DRC is reflected in Gordon's (1988) report which documents a statement made by a 20th-century Afrikaner writer. The writer opined that the progress of the Afrikaner community was being hindered by the presence of native Black people, thereby emphasising the Afrikaners' portrayal as victims of historical conflicts and growing concerns about a gloomy "Black silhouette" on the horizon of their future (Gordon, 1988:535). The "Black silhouette" refers to Black people (Freschi et al, 2019), whom the Afrikaners needed a legitimate and scientific plan to rid themselves of. The DRC had succeeded in positioning the Afrikaners as a predestined group and the Black population as its enemy. This signifies that the belief was formalised through the church.

According to Moore (2015), the works of Werner Willi Max Eiselen, an Afrikaner anthropologist, provided the necessary solution to the Afrikaners. Moore (2015) mentions that Eiselen believed the main challenge in South Africa was not resolving a racial issue but establishing successful systems for the harmonious coexistence of various ethnic groups, which influenced the quick growth of the academia among the Afrikaners. Mbembe (2017) argues that Eiselen's perspectives reflected a form of racism characterised by "*neurosis"* which at its greatest extent is characterised by "phobia, obsession and hysteria" (Mbembe 2017:10). The above literature indicates that Eiselen's perspective, along with the formation of a religious ideology anchored by the DRC, was a deliberate strategy for segregation, leading to the establishment of apartheid in South Africa.

3.2.4 The foundation and student years of apartheid

For Giliomee (2019), apartheid was devised as a strategy to ensure a reliable and inexpensive workforce for the Afrikaner farmers and the growing group of Afrikaner entrepreneurs. It was a faith-based idea that was fuelled by science and the media and soon gained traction with the dawn of African state independence during the 1960s (Giliomee, 2019). Gordon (1988) posits that the foundations of apartheid began when young Afrikaner students who were struggling to legitimise Afrikaans went to Germany, a country that was a benchmark of ethnology in African languages in the 1920s. Upon their return to South Africa, the students discovered that their peers were

being mobilised towards nationalism. By 1933, Afrikaans universities founded the *Afrikaanse National Studente-unie* (National Afrikaans Student-Union), which promoted militant nationalism and disassociated itself from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) which was more liberal in ideology and served as a mainstay for Black students at liberal universities (Gordon, 1988).

Eiselen's work inspired the Afrikaners to study Afrikaner ethnology to promote "*the task of leading the volk to self-realisation and an indestructible love for one's own race and country*" (Gordon, 1988). However, the researcher asserts that the apartheid regime, as evident in the above statement, acted hypocritically because while Afrikaners were developing their own identity, they were also, simultaneously, stifling the development, identity and consciousness of others.

Moore (2015) adds that there was discipline and knowledge behind the construct and development of apartheid with the intention to convey a sense of ethical preservation while also addressing racial discrimination otherwise known as the "Native Question" (SAHO, 2019; see also Gordon, 1988). Hodgkinson (2016) introduces the view that South Africa was a pilot project in the 1930s, with limited ideas to guide its strategy of segregation and separate development and that South African leaders needed a benchmark to guide their ideals and solidify their romantic values of a community with an ideal government model (Hodgkinson, 2016). Therefore, the segregation of the 1930s United States of America (USA) during the height of Jim Crow and the idea of Black autonomy in the American South with its separated schools and churches inspired South Africa's leaders (Giliomee, 2003). This observation seeks to highlight the substantial influence of the USA on the idea and execution of apartheid in those who perpetuated it because South Africa was regarded as *"the USA in the making"* (Giliomee, 2019: 39).

The researcher agrees that the American experience helped create a legal framework that enforced discriminatory policies against non-white individuals in South Africa (History.com, 2020) because Jim Crow was "enacted to keep the [African American] races separate" (Wynes, 1967:422). Kousser, (2003) asserts that the Jim Crow law regulated interactions and connections among social, economic, and political entities between Black and white and white races in order to reduce African Americans as a group to whites. Jim Crow enforced discrimination based on race in schools and public

establishments, including railroads and restaurants. Edwards and Bennett (2010) state that the law institutionalised prejudiced practices that established the legal structure required for the unequal treatment of African Americans and enforced widespread racial segregation by legally defining boundaries that separated white and Black people in society.

Stevenson (2018, 06:43) remarks that “the great evil of American slavery was not the forced labour [of Black people], but rather the construction of a narrative that emphasised racial distinctions, which in turn fostered the development of the ideology of white supremacy”. This narrative served as a means for the institution of slavery to absolve itself from being perceived as inherently evil. He further notes that this form of “slavery [in America] did not end in 1865 [but] evolved into racial terrorism… and Jim Crow to support and sustain the racial hierarchy” [of segregation] (Stevenson, 2018, 07:13). This view presents Jim Crow as a lesser evil than slavery because it gave the Black population a sense of freedom from slavery.

The literature therefore supports the argument that Jim Crow is similar to the South African Native Land Act of 1913, which Feinberg (1993) shows first significant legislation that would later form the legal framework of apartheid because it was enacted to promote farming labour, to stop land purchases by Africans, [and] to promote segregation… in the [then] recently formed Union of South Africa”. Walker (2014) asserts that the Natives Land Act served as a temporary measure by the Union of South Africa to uphold the existing state of land ownership by whites.

Regarding the point about the “native question” raised in this study, Feinberg (1993: 85) states:

> A few whites within South Africa believed that efforts to bring about equality between Black and white could solve the "problem," but the vast majority of those who commented on the question believed the idea of equality to be an anathema to most South African whites, whose attitudes were little different from whites in the United Sates or most European colonies.

The present study thus draws two similarities between apartheid, specifically the Native Land Act, and America’s Jim Crow, namely:

- The whites in power considered themselves chosen (superior) while Africans (Blacks) were classified as cursed to be servants (Pilgrim, 2000; Gordon, 1988); and

- Segregation was appointed as a divine order by those in power (Pilgrim, 2000; Gilomee 2019).

Gilomee (2019) asserts that the Nationalist leadership openly looked to the American South as a model when introducing the apartheid legislation. The essence of the apartheid ideology was to justify it by focusing on one's own culture and way of life, emphasising the preservation of the Afrikaner identity as crucial.

3.2.5 Formation of Afrikaner Press

Boddy-Evans (2021) recalls that the term apartheid was first used in 1948 during DF Malan's Herenigde Nasionale Party (HNP) election campaign. DF Malan was the Minister of the Interior of the Union of South Africa and later became the first Prime Minister of South Africa to implement apartheid policy after the 1948-election campaign (Hyslop, 2014). According to Giliomee (2019), the concept of apartheid originated from a history of British and Afrikaner oppression, land confiscation, aggression and enforced separation of the indigenous African population. The measures were designed to suppress the Black population and compel them to yield to European authority. Thus, before the apartheid system was officially named, its groundwork had been established over centuries and specific strategies had been created to sustain it. However, in order for apartheid to gain traction, it needed influential mediums to spread its message, and these were in the form of print media, church ministers, academics, professional men and senior journalists who reported the idea to the public (Giliomee, 2019).

Chimutengwende (1978:44-45) provides a contextual perspective of the media in South Africa during the apartheid years thus:

> South Africa is ruled as an inflexibly militant racist and capitalist state... The media are by law expected to support the state, its security and general welfare… The fundamental values and interest of the ruling class dominate and are propagated in one way or another in the dominant media.

The above view, besides supporting Giliomee's (2019) assertion about the media as an influential medium, suggests that the media was used intentionally to populate the message and validity of apartheid to its audience. Mouton (2005) affirms that the media as an opinion former, along with journalists, withheld information from their readers and created an environment where Afrikaners were denied the opportunity to

understand the reality of their society, but instead upheld ideologies such as pass laws and other apartheid legislation. Mouton's (2005) assertion is reinforced by Wasserman (2010: 23), who states that the Afrikaans-language press served as a validating institution for apartheid and positioned itself as a source of information that was embedded in the "emotional, psychic, spiritual, social, economic, political and psychological lives of a community". The researcher therefore contends that the dawn of Afrikaner-print media in South Africa was used by the apartheid government to reject the idea of liberalism and political integration. As McLuhan (2003) has already shown, the character of a medium is often overlooked by its audience because they focus on its content.

Newton (1995) describes media as the "Fourth Estate of the Realm," indicating its role as an advocate of the state and its laws and therefore an essential component of democratic rule. The nationalist framework granted white citizens the right to vote, thereby presenting the apartheid state as a democratic state. Adanlawo and Rugbeer (2021) however assert that the media, as a fourth estate, bears the duty of providing the public with accurate information to safeguard the stability of the country. In essence, the dissemination of information by the media should instil a feeling of safety among its users. It implies that possessing knowledge provides a sense of comfort and enables people to make more informed opinions. The lack of knowledge might therefore be perceived as a potential risk to the security and well-being of media users.

Spreading the message of apartheid therefore happened organically, by means of social conditioning through channels that people were most at ease with listening to, such as church ministers, schoolteachers and journalists (Giliomee, 2019). This was perhaps also a nod to the American approach, which used the media to label Africans as a lower-class group and perpetuated their stereotypes in their publications (Pilgrim, 2000).

This study therefore contends that the marriage of the media with Afrikaner legislature created a conducive environment for the structure of apartheid. Boddy-Evans (2021) alludes to some of the legislations that supported apartheid thus giving insight into its influence:

> The most significant acts of the apartheid era were the Group Areas Act No 41 of 1950, which led to over three million people being relocated through forced removals.

> The Suppression of Communism Act No 44 of 1950, which was broadly worded [to allow any rebellious] group the risk of being 'banned'. The Bantu Authorities Act No 68 of 1951, which led to the creation of Bantustans; and the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act No 67 of 1952, which, despite its title, led to the rigid application of Pass Laws.

The above list is not exhaustive as it does not include other laws like the Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953, which created a substandard education system to perpetuate the subordinate and marginalised position of the country's Black racial group by preparing Black students for manual labour to increase the low-income workforce (Phillips, 1999; Thobejane, 2013). According to Phillips (1999), the apartheid state sought to limit the educational and professional development of Black persons by setting their focus on the achievements of white people.

3.2.6 Black Students and Bantu Education

The Afrikaner government promoted the concept of Christian National Education in the 1930s to cultivate in Black children a reverence for the history, traditions and culture of their ethnic group in order to maintain their identity (Giliomee, 2019). This is because the Afrikaner had "understood too dearly what it meant to be uprooted from their own language and traditions by a foreign authority" after losing the Anglo-Boer war (Müller, 2019:11). Woodson's (1993) seminal work further exemplifies that the Bantu education system was similar to the US practice, which aimed to transform rather than develop the Black child. This meant that this form of education fell under the guise of cultural preservation, benefiting the ethnic groups it targeted (Woodson, 1993). Gordon (1988) and Moore (2015) suggest that Afrikaners were not inherently selfish or short-sighted and were capable of granting the Black race rights to autonomous development in separate areas, which Ardèvol-Abreu (2015:436) interprets as a process whereby "individuals integrate and remember information better when it is consistent with their own knowledge and interpretive schemas". The latter would suggest that the apartheid approach to education was founded on the principle of developing people according to their customs and or knowledge. However, Christie and Collins (1982) and Rosnes, 2019 note that Verwoerd advocated that Black education be exclusively based in native areas, within a native environment and community, in order to further segregate ethnic groups and widen the gap between language communities. That education system would be brought under state control and would be the much-longed-for solution to the *Native Problem*, which as noted by

Feinberg (1993), had been an issue for politicians, newspaper editors and society at large since the rule of Smuts. Bantu education would therefore, teach the *natives* (Black scholars) to find their "*tribal place in a white-dominated society*" (Christie & Collins, 1982:60). This study contends that this method acted as the psychological basis that the apartheid regime used to strengthen the perception of inferiority in young Black children.

The Afrikaner anthropologist Werner Willi Max Eiselen was to be an advocate of the proposed Bantu Studies (Eiselen Commission) because Eiselen's paper on the Native Policy was favourable to the implementation of separate education (Gordon 1988). On this view, Majeke (1994: 93) quotes a speech Verwoerd gave in 1954, which states in part that:

> …One of the important functions [these] new [Bantu] schools will serve is teach Africans the two official languages [English and Afrikaans]. This makes the African a better servant for Europeans because, the economic structure of [this] country, of course, results in large number of natives having to earn their living in the service of Europeans.

Rosnes (2019) also notes that the Bantu Education Act was introduced to give wide powers to the Minister of Native Affairs, H. F. Verwoerd, to bring into effect the major recommendations of the Eiselen Commission. The Act was to be centrally controlled and financed under the Native Affairs Minister, the syllabuses were to be tailored to the Black way of life and African [Black] languages were to be incorporated into all Black schools (Rosnes, 2019). The control of Black schools was to be slowly taken from the missionary bodies, which were independently running the vast majority of Black schools at that time in order to be placed under the Native Affairs Department (Christie & Collins, 1982; Gallo, 2020).

The primary purpose of the Bantu Education Act was to indoctrinate the Black community into believing they were inferior and should accept subordinate roles in a society dominated by whites, a concept that contradicted the teachings of Catholic ideology in mission schools (Christie & Collins, 1982). In support of Christie and Collins (1982), Anderson (2020) adds that missionary schools in South Africa provided Black students with a liberal arts education within a Catholic-Christian environment that did not impose limitations on the level of education attainable, unlike the Bantu Education system. Anderson (2020: 156) further notes that the Catholic belief in the equality of all individuals as children of God contradicted the apartheid ideology of racial

segregation and distinction, which was thus labelled as a “Roman threat to the apartheid system of Bantu Education”. The emphasis of Bantu Education was to be on training and not education because the former “would keep the Native in his place as a labourer and rid him of his foolish aspirations to emulate the white boss” (Anderson, 2020:156). This meant that although mission schools sought to retain their education system of equality and brotherhood, they were placed under pressure by the apartheid government that refused to subsidise the Catholic school system, leaving the Church to raise funds for continuous operation (Anderson, 2020).

Gallo (2020) reports that the apartheid state wanted the power to prescribe the courses, the languages the courses would be taught in, and the funding received by Bantu schools to stress the concept of “Afrikaner guardianship” and racial inequality and ultimately mould the Black community into “Bantu” as devised in the education system. Gilomee (2019) however argues that both the Eiselen report and the Act introducing Bantu Education operated on the perception that African minds have less potential, thus, preparing Black students for an inferior place in society. This sentiment echoes John Biewen's findings on the origin of racism as a fabricated concept [*the lie that invented racism]* (Biewen, 2019).

In Gallo's (2020) study on how the Bantu education functioned, it was found that Black students were allocated an average of 205 minutes per week to learn Afrikaans and English, which exceeded the time allocated for other subjects such as arithmetic, social studies, health education, needlework, plantation, handwork, home-craft and nature studies. The government prioritised language based on Majeke's (1994) report, which suggests that students would respond more effectively to instructions if they could comprehend the language.

Khumalo (2022) comment on the devaluation of Black education by highlighting the insufficient allocation of resources towards providing high-quality education for Black scholars. This resulted in Black scholars receiving a fraction of what their white counterparts received.

However, both Gallo (2020) and Khumalo (2022) agree that the shortage of teachers, facilities, feasible structures such as classrooms, furniture as well as books made the Bantu Education system difficult to execute. Gallo (2020) also notes that while Black teachers opposed this education system, they were given no choice on the matter, as

unemployment was the consequence of their opposition. As Christie and Collins (1982: 66) note below:

> The Bantu Education Act stipulated that all Black schools would have to be registered with the government, and that registration would be at the discretion of the Minister. This measure enabled the government to close any educational programmes which did not support its aims. This [also] meant that the administrative differences characteristic of Black schooling in the previous decades were to be replaced by a uniform and central system.

Du Bois' (1994: 65) seminal work questions this method of education: "By refusing to give [the Black scholar] the key to knowledge, can any sane man imagine that they will lightly lay aside their yearning and contentedly become hewers of wood and drawers of water?"

Nkomo (2021) argues that "apartheid imposed a more stringent, virulent education regime [on the Black student], the effects of [which] inflicted profound psychological disfigurement" and that "[Verwoerd]… understood the ramifications of domination through educational deprivation". The effects of Bantu Education thus became "the cornerstone of separate development that degraded African history, culture, and identity while promoting racist stereotypes in its curriculum" (Khanyile, 2017:45).

The above literature indicates that the establishment of the Bantu Education system, while strategic, faced challenges due to its own limitations and beliefs.

3.3 Introduction of Black Consciousness as an alternative to the Bantu Education Act

"The state is a powerful identifier because it has the material and symbolic resources to impose the categories to which actors must refer".

(Brubaker & Cooper, 2000: 16)

According to Frankel (1981) and Gallo (2020), the Bantu Education Act was a major source of frustration to many Black students who regarded it as a means to perpetuate their social inferiority in the land of their forefathers.

Mpungose (2016) states that reflecting on one's life experiences helps one comprehend the past and use that understanding to influence the present and future.

Mbembe (2017) affirms that if the Black race is to reclaim their history, it would be crucial to establish an archive that documents the contributions of Black individuals to society. This initial step would enable Black people to perceive themselves in a new and more favourable way. The researcher, therefore, argues that Bantu Education hindered Black people's awareness of their history by intentionally categorising and segregating tribal groups thereby restricting their opportunities to interact and educate themselves about Black history. Separation in the South African context meant isolation because the various ethnic groups are either similar or stem from three foundational groups, namely the Basotho (Tshwana, Pedi and South Sotho), Nguni (Swazi, Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Shangaan) and Venda. The researcher assumes that the Group Areas Act hindered the opportunity for different groups to interact and exchange their histories due to the forced relocation of Black people.

Chapter Two defined Black Consciousness as a philosophical framework aimed at promoting critical thinking, intellectual development and correcting false assumptions about Black culture. The chapter also highlighted the need for BC in the Black community. Arnold (2017) asserts that Black Consciousness aimed for individuals to align with its message and ideology instead of showing loyalty to a specific person by stating that the primary focus of BC was on advancing humanity as a collective group, along with enhancing the dignity and self-assurance of Black individuals. Gibson (2011: 47) on the other hand, notes that it was only when all signs of oppression were removed that one could move forward in thought to bring about necessary change by asking, “why must it be the case that what whites have achieved constitute the highest standards that humanity can achieve?” Biko (2017) notes that Black consciousness was a means to teach the Black population to see themselves as being complete in themselves [their history], in their fundamental beliefs and in their values, contrary to the teachings of Bantu Education.

Diseko (1992) supposes that students affected by Bantu Education became aware of the scheme against them and established a student organisation to unite and strategize against it. Diseko (1992) cites the authoritarian management of the schools and the absence of channels for students to voice their opinions and seek remedies for their complaints as the primary reasons for founding the South African Student Movement in 1968. She notes that while authoritarianism in African schools was not

an unusual phenomenon in the 1960s, it had escalated to the extent that many students dropped out of school too soon (Diseko, 1992).

Diseko's (1992) report on the formation of the South African Student Movement (SASM) and its influence on the youth shows a path of resistance to the Bantu Education system in an environment where security police dealt severely with student political activism (Diseko, 1992). The report highlights a statement by Verwoerd in 1954 to Black teachers, cautioning them about the implications of implementing Bantu Education: "People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for Natives" (Diseko, 1992: 46). This statement challenges the claims by Gallo (2020) and Khumalo (2022) regarding government funding of African schools. It suggests that the remarks may negatively impact teachers and convey a feeling of hopelessness when seeking salary increases or support from the government to enhance their schools. Diseko (1992) suggests that SASM symbolised innovative thinking, offering a new outlook on how Black students perceived themselves.

Rickett (2021) recalls the actions of Iranian autocrat Shar Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who criminalised opposition and gained power through a secret police service. This example resembles apartheid South Africa's Suppression of Communism Act No. 44 of 1950. The Act defined protestors as communists who aimed to bring about political, industrial, social or economic change in South Africa and ordered their ban (O'Malley, n.d.). According to Massabalala (1972), the apartheid government used the Suppression of Communism Act to suppress opposition and control political activities.

Diseko (1992:45) confirms Massabalala's (1972) claim by stating that security forces were harsh in handling student political involvement during the Bantu Education era from the late 1960s to early 1970s. Most school principals were determined to maintain a politically neutral environment in their schools and closely monitored student activities to support the group. The literature indicates that the Suppression of Communism Act was designed to categorise any movement that fell outside the boundaries of the apartheid system as "communistic and illegal" thus making any form of social resistance to apartheid an act of criminality worthy of punitive action.

Khanyile however, reports that the Black Consciousness Movement was the "best thing that happened to [the youth] in the 1960s and 1970s because it took away the

brainwashing of Bantu Education and gave them a sense of oneness and identity" (Khanyile, 2017, 06:48).

Redefining Blackness through the Black Consciousness Movement

Gerhard regards the role of media in the 1970s as being dominated by *The World* newspaper and the *Rand Daily Mail* which published news about Black universities and statements made by Black Consciousness figures (Gerhard, 1994:1). *The World* was edited by Percy Qoboza, an outspoken critic of apartheid and one of South Africa's most influential Black newspaper editors who used his platform to speak of the hidden ills of apartheid South Africa (Lotter, 2022; see also Pather, 1999).

Mbembe (2017) argues that individuals classified by race often view themselves exclusively within that context (that frame) and choose to conform to its predetermined path. Disobeying that law in South Africa resulted in imprisonment or torture, as mentioned earlier. This study posits therefore that Black Consciousness restored truth and pride in the Black identity by confronting racism as the act of substituting one thing for another (Mbembe, 2017). The closure of Turfloop University in 1972 was another contributor to the spread of Black Consciousness because Onkgopotse Tiro, a dedicated member of the South African Student Organisation (SASO), took a risk by using the university's graduation ceremony as an opportunity to promote the goals of Black Consciousness (Moloi, 2011). Tiro was subsequently expelled for delivering a controversial speech and he along with other expelled students found new teaching jobs across the country thus spreading the message and identity of Black Consciousness. Hlongwane (2015) supports the concept of teachers as alternative media of communication but also adds that home-land leaders, journalists and schoolboards are other role players in the dissemination of information.

According to Professor Ashwin Desai, the Black Consciousness Movement was born in Durban in 1969, as a feeling and a sense of justice (SABC, 2019). Biko, one of the co-founders, explained the deterioration caused by oppression by citing Fanon, who states that "colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content by a kind of perverted logic [as defined under Bantu Education], it turns to the past of the oppressed and distorts it" (Biko 2017: 31).

Chapter 2 outlined that Black Consciousness aimed to correct false images of Blackness, promote collective action against apartheid, and reject value systems that reduce human dignity and make Black people foreigners in their own land (Mpungose, 2016; Arnold, 2017). Temba Sono, a member of SASO, argued that "Black Consciousness delivers the reconditioning of the Black man, to unlearn the stereotype that white is the hallmark of God, and that Black is the title badge of evil". (Sono, 1971: 19).

According to this definition, SASO was standing for the principles of liberating Black people from the stereotypes that defined them. Members of SASO also presented the following as their Policy Manifesto:

> SASO is a Black Student Organisation working for the liberation of the Black man (*sic*) first from psychological oppression by themselves through inferiority complex and secondly from the physical accruing out of living in [a] white racist society (SASO Newsletter, September 1971: 15).

This suggests that the concept of collective thinking developed by SASO was instrumental to the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement. It further suggests that the movement aimed to represent all Black people striving to liberate themselves from oppression. Klandermans (2014) refers to this as a collective identity, as it became politically relevant when individuals who identified with the movement participated in political activities on behalf of the group. The movement seemingly served as an identity builder that informed individuals of their membership in a specific social category or group (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Based on Mbembe's (2017) assertion that the goal of apartheid was to sort population groups simultaneously as species and classes, the researcher argues that Black Consciousness sought to reverse this notion and identity through intellectual stimulation and development brought about by education against a system that taught shame and defeat to the Black person. Gibson notes that Black Consciousness wanted to create an environment where Black people could think about action towards liberation rather than being subjected to the values of white liberals (Gibson 2011). According to Mpungose (2016), the movement served as a means to interact with individuals whose humanity and existence were questioned by the western world.

Biko (2017), like Woodson (1993) before Jim Crow, recognised that by making people feel inferior, there would be no need to force them to accept a lower status, as they

would willingly seek it themselves. The researcher contends that this approach was the foundation of the Bantu education system. Mbembe describes this image in apartheid South Africa thus:

> To be Black is to be stuck at the foot of a wall with no doors, thinking nonetheless that everything will open up in the end. The Black person knocks, begs and knocks again waiting for someone to open a door that does not exist (Mbembe 2017: 152).

Gibson states that Fanon also used description similar image when he compared being Black to a state of helplessness by the African who habitually seeks a "*demiurge*" [a supernatural figure] to rescue him from his lot (Gibson 2011). Biko's school of thought however seemingly sought to teach the Black population that such a being (the demiurge) did not exist and that the Black people would be their own liberator (Biko 2017). This study considers Biko's writings an alternative media as they educated his readers that the power to change the situation of apartheid would have to come from a "programme worked out by Black people for Black people to defeat a programme that [was] working against them" (Biko 2017: 163). According to Borah's (2011) framing theory, Biko's writing forged a visual frame that would help his followers organise what they saw in everyday life and use it as a frame to organise information for his audience to promote a particular topic.

Khanyile (2017) describes how the Black Consciousness Movement grew in society by reporting its influx in culture through images of Black pride that celebrated afro hair instead of straight hair and African print in clothing to celebrate the African heritage instead of western prints. This move made the psychological liberation from Bantu Education possible for the students of Black Consciousness. Furthermore, the music of Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and others like them came to the scene in the 1970s which emphasised the message and ideology of Black Consciousness to the youth in the 1970s (Khanyile, 2017). The cultural contributions to this identity development reinforced the words of anti-apartheid activist, Dr Nthato Motlana (Khanyile, 2017, 07:25) who stated:

> There's no greater force than an idea whose time has arrived. That idea is Black consciousness which will free the Black man from the shackles of white imperialism, slavery, and oppression.

Meredith (2011) notes that though the Black public education system endured years of neglect compared to the white education system, the Black Consciousness ideology

managed to influence university and high school students in various parts of the country (Arnold, 2017:192). Black Consciousness taught scholars not to accept a definition or expectation of others about themselves – it was developed on the frame of identity and consciousness (Giddens, 2023; Pityana, 2012).

Walgrave, van Laer, Verhulst, and Wouters (2010) state that the role of community development projects such as the ones that Biko undertook with Pityana shaped the minds, hearts and souls of Black students and it gave them hope to fight for a cause that was greater than their individual lives. The movement gained traction in entertainment and leisurely activities. Black Consciousness also taught student leaders who actively went into communities to train students to engage in debate while teaching them about liberation ideologies. The efforts produced groups of students who became the core of the Black Consciousness Movement (Pityana, 2012; cf. Gerhard 1994; Gibson 2011). Khanyile notes the influence of the arts through an organisation called the Medupi Writers Association which took the message of Black Consciousness to schools by disguising it as poetry readings and making its campaign sound academic (Khanyile, 2017).

This study agrees that the apartheid regime created a lack of emphasis on Black identity in schools, which the Black Consciousness Movement aimed to address. Gibson (2011) and Arnold (2017) concur that Biko's testimony during the "SASO Nine" trial ignited the 1976 student uprising because his accurate thinking and strong conviction motivated the youth to assert themselves and demand to be heard, resembling a David versus Goliath scenario where faith triumphs over fear. Following the widespread dissemination of Black Consciousness as a form of identity, students in Soweto began to express their discontent when the Department of Bantu Education introduced Afrikaans as the language of instruction in 1976 (Hlongwane, 2015). They perceived this imposition as a violation of their Black identity and values and protested the decision in order to maintain their dignity as Black individuals even though they were young members of their community.

3.4 The 1976 student march

Khanyile (2017) notes that in April 1976, students at Phefeni Junior High School protested against the use of Afrikaans, resulting in the formation of two main groups: one led by student leader Tsietsi Mashinini, who was influenced by SASM and SASO

and subsequently became the most sought-after student leader (Maphunye, 2017), and another group influenced by SASO teachers who were university graduates and members of SASO (Khanyile, 2017). On 13 June 1976, students appointed an action committee to organise a march on June 16th. The date was selected to coincide with the commencement of exams in order to maximise student participation (Khanyile, 2017).

According to Majeke (1994), the combination of SASM, SASO and the Black Consciousness Movement led the students to focus their protests on the education system and the political aspects of apartheid. Thus, the youth of 1976 redefined their identity and aspirations, by replacing the term "non-white" with a commitment to Blackness and Black Consciousness as a lifestyle (Heffernan & Nieftagodien, 2016). This study affirms that this was the beginning of the resistance against the apartheid regime which was expressed through Bantu education.

Gerhard (1994) provides some context to this history. She notes that Onkgopotse Tiro, one of the founding members of SASO, joined Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto, as a history teacher after he was expelled from the University College of the North in 1972 for criticising the Bantu Education Act of 1953. While Tiro was a teacher, he taught students about Black Consciousness philosophy and initiated a campaign to urge students to question the accuracy and material in the history books recommended by the Department of Bantu Education (Gerhard, 1994). The notion of collective identity (Walgrave et al*,* 2010; Klandermans, 2014) provide clarity on why these students stood up to take part in a political activity that they hoped would change their circumstances while expressing their views and feelings about the imposed education system and identity enforced on them. In Phakeng's (2019) view, the students of 1976 did not only resist being taught in Afrikaans, but they also understood that the change in the medium of education would limit their ability to achieve significant academic success.

Fisher (2020), a student at Morris Isaacson, recalls a hopeful morning on 16 June and narrates the scene after their morning assembly. She notes that students sang struggle songs on their way to march against Afrikaans as a medium of education (Fisher, 2020). Fisher recalls that the size of the protest took her by surprise because she had assumed that only Morris Isaacson scholars and a handful of others would be

participating in the march because they had to be discreet (Fisher, 2020). While they were on their way to rally students from Orlando West High School, they heard gunshots, causing the march to halt as students panicked. However, they soon realised that the security police were relentlessly pursuing them, and the gunshots were not stopping (Fisher, 2020). Fisher notes that the students' anger made them brave and although they were unarmed, they were fearless because they faced bullets with dustbin lids, placards and stones, undeterred by the forceful action of the police (Fisher, 2020).

Another account of the protest comes from David Mashinini, Tsietsi Mashinini's brother, who states that in the midst of live bullets, the youth were afraid but wanted to continue their fight (eNCA, 2016). Mashinini's recollection aligns with Walgrave et al's (2010) and Ahmed's (2019:68) observation that "intensely motivated people participate in protest with people with whom they share interests and values".

Photojournalist Sam Nzima captured images of the uprising, revealing South Africa's hidden reality when his image appeared on the front pages of major international newspapers (Baines, 2007). On 16 June 1976, Nzima, an employee at the World Newspaper, took the photograph, which the afternoon Express newspapers later published to commemorate the shootings. International media subsequently disseminated it to raise awareness about the violent situation in South Africa (Nzima, 2014).

The protest by school students against the decree to teach in Afrikaans sparked an uprising that garnered national support and challenged the system of exploitation and oppression of Black South Africans (Molteno, 1979). In response to the protest of 16 June 1976, Black workers in South Africa staged the most impressive political action in September 1976, embarking on a strike for three days. This action resulted in an 80% absentee rate in both Johannesburg and Cape Town, severely disrupting the country's infrastructure and commerce (Gerhard, 1994).

Heffernan and Nieftagodien (2016:60) give a summary of the reason for the march:

> The aim of the march was to gather students from schools in Soweto at the Orlando Stadium [final destination], where the student representatives would lead discussions about Afrikaans and the Department of Bantu Education and draw up a petition for the government department...

The students from Soweto took a bold stand against the system and some of them paid for it with their lives. Nonetheless, their actions reverberated throughout South Africa, where sympathetic groups converged to amplify their voices and point out the injustice of apartheid to the Black communities in South Africa. These social structures meandered their way throughout South Africa and thus started a national conscientisation of Black Consciousness. Khanyile makes the following statement about the uprising:

> You beat repression by being creative. Biko's writing became a focal point to [our] liberation. Apartheid wanted us to become what it wanted us to be – their image of what it means to be Black – but we lived a different image of what it meant to be Black and, in that way, defeated Apartheid (Khanyile, 2017, 48:00).

Khanyile's film Uprise! also shows that apart from shedding light on the atrocities of apartheid to an international audience, the 1976 uprising resulted in national solidarity, which was the hallmark of that period (Khanyile, 2017). It started with a protest and ended with the struggle for liberation – the uprising made it clear that the fight was no longer about Afrikaans but about the ultimate struggle for liberation (Khanyile, 2017). Khanyile argues that the youth of 1976 ended the impasse from the 1960s which caused prominent figures in the struggle such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and other Rivonia trial leaders to be sentenced to life in prison by the courts (Khanyile, 2017).

3.5 Fall of apartheid

Giliomee (2019) states that from 1977 to 1982, the apartheid government acknowledged the possibility of a single Parliament where non-white individuals could be represented. Worth noting is that this period follows the student protest of 1976. The initial effort to establish such a Parliament was the implementation of the Tricameral Parliament, where Coloureds and Indians were represented but Blacks were excluded (Forsyth, 2022). Gordon (1988) argues that this was because apartheid was based on the belief that the Afrikaner identity needed to be preserved, not as a humanistic discussion but as a method of social control.

Stemmet and Barnard (2002) observe that the decline of apartheid began after the 1985 *Rubicon speech* by President PW Botha, which was broadcast to over three million people across the world. The speech led to South Africa's international isolation, sanctions and economic decline, exacerbated by critical media coverage

which according to Stemmet and Barnard (2002) highlighted Botha's ineffective leadership and exposed his immature behaviour to a global audience. The broadcast of the Rubicon speech illustrates Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes' (2014) perspective on the indirect influence of mainstream media in shaping attitudes and resources. According to Stemmet and Barnard (2002), the speech was a topical event that garnered the support of an international audience and investors who had hoped that President Botha would denounce his views on apartheid. The presence of mainstream media reinforced what Hoffman and Pompper (2020) refer to as news values, which include factors such as audience appeal, impact, timeliness, prominence and unusualness. The speech was valuable and marketable to the international press because of what it represented—a new beginning for South Africa and its international investors.

Kruger (1998) indicates that there was a secret period of pre-negotiation between the National Party and the banned African National Congress (ANC) from 1985 to 1990. This phase aimed to assess the potential for a negotiated settlement and establish a common understanding of the steps required to stabilise South Africa's politics. The end of apartheid began when President FW de Klerk released Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990, arguing that it was actually a subsequent phase to the initial negotiations. De Klerk (2002) asserts that the release of Mandela and other political prisoners shaped the bilateral pre-negotiation talks between political parties and led to the subsequent multilateral negotiations between these parties. The outcome of the negotiations was the 1991 National Peace Accord (NPA). This process was followed by the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) negotiations, which involved 19 parties and over 400 negotiators who were organised into working groups to establish the rules for the transition and a new constitution (De Klerk, 2002; Von Feigenblatt, 2008). The above building blocks led to the first democratic election in 1994 in which people of all races were able to vote and which ushered in a democratic government with Nelson Mandela as the head of state.

3.6 Era of freedom and democracy

According to Fanon, liberation is not fully achieved if the colonial or apartheid city is not restructured, but only captured by a new government (in Gibson, 2011). The researcher interprets this notion through the illustration of the South African national

liberation movement in which leaders, driven by economic rather than social progress, not only assumed empty political roles but also embraced the colonial mind-set of their predecessors. This viewpoint is supported by Dlamini, who argues that the African National Congress (ANC) inherited a system that was anti-Black; a system aimed at cultivating a Black population that adhered to its principles and refrained from critically evaluating its ideology (King David Studios, 2024). Gibson (2011) further asserts that the failure to reorganise the apartheid structures has left the lines of force intact and reproduced urban spaces where the love and power of money as well as the political state, not human needs, are sacred and valued.

On the above issue, Woodson (1993), comments that “In the case of career politics, some [Black people] hoard positions and want to remain alone in power for fear of seeing the other prosper more than he does and be recognised accordingly”.

This study therefore contends that there can be no liberation in that state if the citizen’s living conditions and infrastructure reminds them of the income gap that was once created by a group of people under the apartheid regime, specifically the white community.

Mandela recognised the equal society Biko spoke about, in which Black and white people lived side by side, but his government was unable to achieve completely the "proportional contribution" that Biko addressed (Biko, 2017: 136). Meridith reports that Mandela acknowledged this deficiency, as he said, “I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb” (in Meredith, 2011: 654).

Mandela implied that the “struggle for liberation” did not end with his coming to power but rather that his ascension uncovered hidden aspects previously obscured by the former regime. With his reign came the desire to see social equality realised in an expedited manner. According to Meridith (2011), this put pressure on the president, and he made the following statement to the parliament very early in his reign:

> The government literally does not have the money to meet the demands that are being advanced. No action of any kind will not create resources that the government does not have. All of us must rid ourselves of the wrong notion that the government has a big bag full of money. The government does not have such riches. We must rid ourselves of the culture of entitlement that leads to the expectation that the government must promptly deliver whatever it is we demand” (Meredith, 2011: 657).

The above sentiment reinforces Woodson's (1993: 124) statement that "there must be change before [a Black person] can construct a programme that will bring [him] out of the wilderness [of oppression] created by years of deliberate [domination]".

Gibson (2011: 27) notes that Fanon also argued that "the transformation of the colonised self-consciousness of the body is intimately tied to the transformation of the colonial urban space." Since the governing system values all members of society equally and allows them to be active and equal participants in its renaissance, citizens living in that space would not feel the need to aspire to something better. Gibson (2011) asserts that leaders who rushed for vacated political positions clouded South Africa's freedom by failing to shed the colonial mentality that governed those positions. This resulted in the preservation of power structures and a liberation that adheres to colonial methods.

The above scenarios suggest that the freedom years lacked a sense of identity and contributed to returning Black society to a system they had fought against thus defining this freedom according to the white values they rejected (Woodson 1993; Osterhuizen 2015). Gibson notes that without unity, this newfound "social consciousness" and renaissance were reached without a sense of patriotism and disintegrated into regionalism, tribalism and ethnic xenophobia (Gibson, 2011). Klanderman (2015) echoes Gibson by observing that South Africans have strong subgroup identities but a weak national identity, which led him to raise the question, "Do subgroup identities (ethnicity, culture, race, class, etc.) compete with national identity?" (Klanderman, 2015: 15).

The democratic government brought about another significant change in response to the need to address past educational disparities, fragmented higher education systems and inequalities in education inherited from the apartheid government—the integration of historically Black universities into historically white universities (H Hay, Fourie & J. Hay, 2001). The former Minister of Education, Mr. Kader Asmal, initiated this change in 1999, despite intense political resistance prior to the decision (Jansen, 2003). An additional variable that contributed to the integration of universities was the significant and unforeseen decrease in student enrolment in South African institutions. This trend had particularly severe consequences for the struggling Black universities (Williams, 2021). He also asserts that the aforementioned factors contributing to the

change in universities resulted in a deficiency in the development of additional universities and residential spaces to accommodate the influx of students from previously disadvantaged communities (Williams, 2021).

Based on the above arguments, this study affirms that although apartheid policies are no longer in use, they have left behind a nation of separateness (apartness) in South African culture. However, the country is trying to develop a united national identity through the Social Cohesion and National Building Compact, which requires the collective efforts of society in order for citizens to create a sense of patriotism in its culture (SANews.gov.za, 2022). Through this project, the South African Department of Sport, Arts and Culture identified community leaders in the business sector, trade unions, faith-based organisations and the media industry as key sectors that can work with the government to advance the cause of social cohesion and nation building that would produce “a socially integrated and inclusive society” (SANews.gov.za, 2022).

The advancement of democracy and its remedial actions to address the injustices of apartheid marked the beginning of transformation in South Africa. The next section builds on this initiative and introduces the concept of Fallism as a response to the new government’s policies.

3.7 Fallism and the use of alternative media

This section will give a brief synopsis of the two Fallism movements under study. Mpofu (2017: 355) citing Nkinyangi (1991), revisits the question, “will educational institutions in the future become arenas of social struggle?” to address what he terms, “the disruptive rage and subsequent violent remedial actions” by South Africans. The Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movement began when a Black South African student threw a bucket of excrement over a statue of Cecil Rhodes (who was a key figure in South Africa’s segregation) at the university of Cape Town in March 2015 (Fairbanks, 2015). The move sparked a protest that sought to end the prevalence of apartheid and colonial era statues at South African Universities because it spread from UCT to other Universities that were previously reserved for white students. However, Ahmed (2019) argues that the movement was not about the removal of a statue but rather the radical decolonisation of the University of Cape Town (UCT), which would later set the precedence for other students to do the same at their respective institutions. The students rejected the privileging of European theorisations of power and alienation of

Black students by developing a framework centred on Black Consciousness (Ahmed 2019).

To the protesters, the statue represented the celebration of white culture by the University of Cape Town (and others that followed the movement) as well as other elements such as the Eurocentric curriculum, a mostly white governing council and the weak financial and mental-health support for Black students (Fairbanks, 2015; Bosch, 2016). Moreover, the statue of Rhodes attested to the ideas that Rhodes himself promoted, namely the elitism of the white race which resulted in the alienation of Black students, it was a source of pain for Black students (Fairbanks, 2015; Bosch, 2016).

Matabeni (2018) states that the statue acted as an instrument and a reminder that knowledge production was political, which perpetuated how Black students viewed themselves against the backdrop of the history of their respective universities. Fairbanks (2015) and Ahmed (2019) criticise the elimination of history from South Africa's curriculum in the mid-1990s after the country became a democracy. They state that when the students discovered Black history after searching materials on Black Consciousness, Frans Fanon and Pan-Africanism, the lateness of the discovery made them angry. Jeffries (2020) contends that “rather than confront history, [people tend to] avoid it, rationalise it or pretend the past didn’t happen”.

Morreira (2017), on the other hand, presents an opposing viewpoint that the University of Cape Town contributed to the consciousness of its students because it introduced the Black Consciousness philosophy to them. She states that the move to introduce students to the philosophy by lectures was to “allow first-generation university students access to the hidden curriculum because the rules are often taken for granted by students who come from privileged backgrounds” (Morreira, 2017).

Mpungose (2016) argues that Black Consciousness was not a racist concept, but a philosophy aimed at guiding the intense energy of the frustrated Black population towards purposeful and focused resistance, similar to the Black slave who was always on the verge of rebellion, tempted to embrace freedom (cf. Mbembe, 2019). This pattern of dissatisfaction and lack of access to quality education was awakened by the 2015-2016 *Fallism Movement*, as students revolted in a different context (University of Witwatersrand Student Protests, 2016). Maseremule (2015) asserts that these

students, unlike the students of 1976, had access to education and were more modern and cosmopolitan in their outlook.

This study contends that the Fallism concept emerged as a response to the falling (collapse) of certain structures that aggravated students. Fallism can therefore imply various things to different students. Each student group from their respective tertiary institution approached Fallism in several ways, all of which revolved around the subject of colonisation which positioned individuals of African descent at the lowest level of the educational hierarchy. This study therefore uses the term #Fallism or #Fallist to describe the movement and students of the Rhodes and Fees Must Fall protests of 2015 – 2016.

The fall of the Rhodes statues on 9 April 2015 (Trippe, 2019) culminated into Fees Must Fall (FMF) which, similar to its predecessor, stood on the principle of education but differed from the stance on access to education founded on fee structures at all Universities in South Africa. The FMF movement emerged in October 2015, subsequent to the Rhodes Must Fall movement, with its primary objective being the cessation of fee-based education at universities (Naidu, 2022). It spread across universities nationwide after fee increases were announced (A Protest Too Far, 2016). The FMF therefore was a national student-led protest movement to stop increases in student fees and to push for an increase in government funding of universities (Naidu, 2022).

Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, a member and then spokesperson of the Economic Freedom Fighters and advocate of Fallism was quoted as saying, “The ideas of Black pride that Biko represented and spoke about are still alive and [affect] today’s generation” (ETV, 2017). By speaking about both concepts in the present tense, Ndlozi tried to link the message and philosophy of Black Consciousness to the Fallism movement. In both the RMF and FMF movements, students came together to protest actively against colonised education and fee increases. Baines (2007) and Esterhuizen (2015) posit that journalists in the apartheid era may have disregarded the impact of colonialism and apartheid on Black South Africans in order to show a different view of the country. However, the emergence of the 2015-2016 student movement followed the realisation by Black students that they were caught in a long history of Black misery and pain (Fairbanks, 2015).

Scholars such as Greef, Mostert, Kahl and Jonker, C (2021) reveal that the mainstream media's depiction of the movement lacked empathy for the students. They note that the students were aware of the social injustice of educational exclusion while also highlighting their adherence to the values of respect and tolerance which, this studyer asserts, validates the significance of the students' Black Consciousness identity. Maseremule (2015) and Macqueen (2020) suggest that the resurgence of interest in the Black Consciousness philosophy among the 2015-2016 university students echoes its impact on the 1976 generation, leading to the development of new ideas that challenged the existing norms in the 1970s. While the generation of 1976 fought to rid itself of the shackles of perpetual servitude, the youth of 2015-2016 doubted its success (i.e.: of the students of 1976) because they felt and experienced pain that was not intended for them and in turn perpetuated the anger their parents had expressed decades before them (Fairbanks, 2015; Maseremule, 2015).

Consequently, the students of 2015 sought to restore and assert Black pride in their fellow students by offering them the capacity to think and live by a consistent system of sound principles (Maseremule, 2015). Maseremule (2015) also notes the use of language as a political tool, because the language policy limited the number of Black students at historically white universities. Maseremule's (2015) argument suggests that the primary factor linking the identity development of the youth of 1976 and 2015-2016 was race because the majority of participants in the Fees and Rhodes Must Fall movements were Black students who felt alienated by their institutions (Nyamnjoh, 2017; cf. Morreira, 2017; Ahmed, 2019). Linden (2017) states that rather than ignore history, this group of 2015-2016 activists confronted it and called on other universities across the country to join them by using social media and the hashtag. The hashtag, according to Van Laer (2011), changed the way information is published.

According to Postma (2016), activist beginnings, are characterised by two different desires—a desire to be liberated from necessities and a desire to pursue positive freedom. The statue of Rhodes at the University of Cape Town was a reminder of a historical legacy that saw and treated Black people as objects. The removal of the statue was therefore a symbolic moment in what Nyamnjoh (2017: 260) calls the “inevitable fall of white supremacy and privilege on campus" by student protesters seeking to remove the image of institutional racism on campus and calling for

transformation and decolonisation at the university. The same can be said of the introduction of fee-free higher education in 2018 following the FMF Movement of 2015-2016.

The present study asserts that the actions of the group of 1976 inspired what Ghys (2015) and Manning (2017) define as chaos (or the butterfly effect). Manning defines chaos as the recurring pattern of an ordered structure that is highly sensitive to its initial conditions, while Ghys (2015: 19) states that in chaos, “a tiny cause can generate big consequences.” These definitions suggest that the actions of the students in 1976 contributed to the class act, awakening and conscientisation of Fallism in 2015-2016. This study holds that the student uprising in 1976 served as the fundamental basis and cornerstone of Fallism.

3.8 Chapter conclusion

This chapter reviewed the origins of the Afrikaner race and the ideologies that defined its identity. The Afrikaner race launched its culture and identity with a protest, namely the Great Trek, which led the people to form a belief structure based on the need to free themselves from a construct and ideology they felt was oppressive to their own. This study affirms that the desire to safeguard and preserve the Afrikaner identity was the driving force behind apartheid. The chapter also explored the Afrikaner state's use of the media to curate apartheid's message and validity by regulating the content communicated to its audience.

This chapter also examined the prevalence of apartheid laws, which sought to control and define Black communities as non-entities born to serve and submit to white communities. The apartheid state achieved this by enforcing numerous laws and ensuring compliance with these laws through fear or intimidation of those who opposed them. These were the building blocks of the apartheid social structures.

Black students however developed themselves through the Black Consciousness Movement which redefined the image and identity of Blackness, starting at universities and spreading to high schools across the country. This new philosophy not only challenged the inaccuracy of the mainstream media's enforced Black identity but also taught the youth to distance themselves from the labels the apartheid government imposed on them.

The adoption of this identity culminated in the 1976 uprising against the imposition of Afrikaans and Bantu education, which sought to limit Black people to servanthood roles. The chapter also recognises the development of democracy after the fall of apartheid and positions this development as the catalyst for the Fallism movement of 2015-2016 which upheld the same principle of Black Consciousness as the 1976 student uprising.

The following chapter outlines the methodology and research design of this study. This chapter also highlights the methodology employed for data collection and the themes used in the analysis of data obtained from existing media content and semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR:

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used in the current study. The chapter offers an intricate description of the process of collecting and analysing data. It starts by defining the research paradigm that was used and then outlines the chosen research design for the study which aims to explore the impact of media on the growth of Black Consciousness, identity and social change. Furthermore, it explains the rationale behind the selection of a qualitative methodology as the main driver of this study which is validated by a content analysis approach. It also presents the research sample and data collection methods used to obtain this data.

To gain a deeper understanding of the research problem, this study employed two data collection methods—content analysis of media texts and semi-structured interviews with various participants in the student uprisings under investigation. The interviews aimed to understand the movements and their participants as well as the role of the media in these movements. Secondly, the analysis of the selected media for this study, namely SASO Newsletters and X posts on Fees and Rhodes Must Fall, enriched the understanding of how the various media and their content contributed to identity development and building consciousness of identity and race. Through a qualitative content analysis, the semi-structured interview data collection process explored the connections between the experiences of the participants and the media content they encountered. The study guided the selection of these two methods to investigate the role of media and its contribution to the development of identity and conscientisation in youth.

4.2 Research Paradigm

This study employed a constructivism paradigm approach. Adom, Yeboah and Ankarah (2016) define constructivism as an approach that asserts that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through personal experience and reflection. Siti, Lin and Kamal (2019) concur with Adom et al (2016),

adding that the personal opinions of a researcher frequently shape a constructivism approach to research and that these affect the construction of knowledge and interpretation. In this paradigm, researchers are concerned with identifying how people describe their own experiences and what meaning they attribute to them (Soraya, Binti, & Kamal, 2019). Pilarska (2021) concurs that constructivism is the formation of concepts, formed through the construction of knowledge and understanding of the researcher on how the world works. According to Pilarska (2021), there are no absolute truths because knowledge comes from personal and social processes of making sense of things.

This paradigm was chosen because it seeks to construct knowledge and interpret student protest in South Africa from the experiences and perspectives of those who participated in it namely, the participants in the 1976 Soweto uprising and the 2015-2016 Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movement. The choice was guided by the perception advanced by Van Wart, McIntyre & Hall (2023), who state that social exclusion fosters emotions of hostility, deep partisanship, and a tendency to protect oneself. The researcher sought to construct knowledge and document the experiences of student activists based on this perception.

This study also focused on media messages as persuasive information for the selected group (Du Plooy, 2009). Knowledge was constructed from these sources, that is, SASO Newsletters and X feeds on Fees/Rhodes Must Fall, through a qualitative content analysis. Media texts were selected based on Boyle and Schmierbach (2009), who state that the use of media by protesters offers them power to influence political involvement among media audiences, thus encouraging public participation in political involvement such as protest movements. This assertion is also supported by Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes (2014), who state that mainstream media has an indirect influence in fostering attitudes and resources, which encourage participation in protest movements. According to Lee (2014), the connection between protest movements and the media is intricate in terms of how the mainstream media portray these movements.

This study therefore took on a cross-sectional approach, defined by Cherry (2019) as the method of looking at data from a population at a specific point in time by selecting participants based on a particular variable of interest.

4.3 Research Design

There are two broad forms of research designs namely qualitative and quantitative designs. Quantitative research design requires the process of quantifying constructs (Streefkerk, 2023). It involves the presentation of data in numerical form, resulting from a systematic examination of social phenomena using statistical or numerical methods (Watson, 2014:44). This study method is employed to identify patterns and averages, make predictions, examine causal relationships and extrapolate findings to broader populations (Bhandari, 2020). It therefore would be unsuitable for this study as it limits one's understanding of phenomena to quantification rather than in-depth analysis and interpretation.

For that reason, the current study employed a qualitative research design. According to Bhandari (2020), qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data, such as text, to understand concepts or experiences. It serves as a tool for gaining a comprehensive understanding of a problem or for generating innovative research ideas (Bhandari, 2020). Pyo, Lee, Choi, Jang and Ock (2023) define qualitative research as collecting non-quantifiable data, derived from narrative data that can be expressed by words or images to attribute human emotion.

Based on the above definitions, the qualitative approach is the most suitable design for this study. It will address the researcher's quest to understand and analyse South African student protests through semi-structured interviews and alternative media texts in SASO Newsletters and Rhodes and Fees Must Fall X feeds. This study aligns with Bhandari’s (2020) and Pyo et al’s (2023) definitions of qualitative research because it used non-quantifiable data to interpret the findings of the study. It drew on the memories and recollections of the 1976 student uprising and the 2015-2016 Fees and Rhodes and Fees Must Fall student movements.

4.4 Data Collection

As stated earlier, the process of data collection followed two-pronged approaches namely participant semi-structured interviews and content analysis of media text.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews, according to De Jonckheere and Vaughn (2019), consist of a concise set of guiding questions, supplemented by additional follow-up and probing questions based on the responses of the interviewees. McCombes (2020) confirms that a semi-structured approach enables respondents to participate actively and provide their responses in a conducive and informal setting. Conducting interviews helped this study uncover, make accessible and reveal the realities behind the data and the memories of the people whose life experiences were being studied (Ahmed, 2019).

George (2022) highlights the advantages of semi-structured interviews as holistic, providing reliable data and flexibility for follow-up questions. They avoid distractions by creating a thematic framework, encouraging two-way communication and providing more detail and richness due to their open-ended nature. According to George (2022), this method offers more flexibility because it is less structured. This enabled the study to discover patterns while also providing comparisons between respondents. As the questions were open-ended, the researcher was able to capture more depth and richness in the responses of the participants. This allowed the researcher to ask the participants to clarify, elaborate or rephrase their responses where necessary, which assisted in collecting data on the participants' lived experiences.

Wolgemuth, Erdil-Moody, Opsal, Cross, Kaanta, Dickmann, and Colomer, (2015) identify the advantages of semi-structured interviews of participants as self-awareness, self-acknowledgement, the realisation of a sense of purpose, catharsis, healing and offering a voice to marginalised individuals. According to Wolgemuth et al (2015), individuals who engage in interviews express gratitude for the chance to share their narratives with empathetic listeners and express optimism that sharing their experiences could be advantageous to others.

In this context, the interview questions were formulated in an open-ended manner and centred on aspects such as the individuals' motivation to join their respective movements and the source of the information they obtained from their leaders. The researcher also sought consent from participants to participate in the study (Maldonado-Castellanos & Barrios, 2023).

Content analysis

Luo (2019) lists the benefits of content analysis, and these include its unobtrusiveness which allows for data analysis without direct participation from participants or authors of selected texts; its transparency and reproducibility which follows a systematic procedure for replication by other researchers and its versatility which allows for its execution at any time, at any location and at a minimal cost. The only requirement is that the chosen sample be available. According to Bahroun, Anane, Ahmed and Zacca (2023), content analysis is a valuable method that helps researchers see common themes and patterns in the information. For these reasons, content analysis was considered suitable for analysing the research sample of SASO Newsletters and X feeds on Rhodes and Fees Must Fall.

Limitation of content analysis

The limitation of this method (content analysis), as outlined by both Cherry (2019) and Thomas (2020), is that the data may not be able to assess a cause-and-effect relationship between variables and events. However, the researcher aimed to augment this limitation with the primary data which provided a broader picture of the events.

Phase one – Participant interviews

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Sepahvand, Nourozi, Khankeh, Mohammadi-Shahboulaghi & Fallahi-Khoshknab, 2024). The same tool was used for both participant groups with a slight variation based on the specific year of the protest movement. The interviews were conducted in-person in a public setting, at the participants' convenience, lasting between 45 and 90 minutes on average, while some were held online via a virtual link. The data was recorded on the cell phone of the researcher with the participants' permission. Each interview was assigned a numerical label which was also assigned to each participant in sequential order, namely Participant 1, Participant 2, *et cetera*. The data from the interviews was only accessible to the researcher and an independent transcriber but the identities of the participants were not disclosed.

Phase two – Content analysis

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, a content analysis method was used to organise data derived from SASO Newsletters and tweets from the Fallists. Using a content analysis of media texts in conjunction with data from interviews added depth to the data and revealed nuances hidden in the published media. According to Luo (2019), the methodical gathering of information from various sources such as media texts and interviews allows researchers to use code words, themes and concepts found within texts to conduct analyses.

4.5 Research Sample

This study employed a non-probability sampling technique. Nikolopoulou (2022) defines a non-probability sampling method as a technique that uses non-random criteria such as the knowledge of the research sample to address a research question. It is used to obtain a sample that represents a particular characteristic of a population such as individuals who have taken part in a protest movement (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

The decision to use this approach was motivated by the reasons provided by Nikolopoulou (2022):

- Non-probability sampling does not require a sampling timeframe. Therefore, the subjects of the study were readily available which made non-probability sampling quicker and easier to conduct.
- The study was able to focus on specific subgroups within the chosen population of participants of student protest movements.
- Based on the sample under study, the method enabled the study to draw theoretical, analytical and logical generalisations about its subject.

Sampling Technique

The study employed a purposive sampling method where units are deliberately selected based on specific characteristics for the research sample (Nikolopoulou, 2022). The process involved aligning the research sample with the objectives of the study which enhanced its rigour and the reliability of the data and findings (Campbell, Greenwood, Walker, Prior, Shearer, Walken, Bywaters, 2020). This technique was suitable for the study because the sample was chosen based on the participants'

perceived experiences of the student movements and because it requires less resources and time than most traditional research methods (Stratton, 2024).

Sample size and selection criteria

The researcher had a purposive sample size of 14 individuals from the 1976 movement and 10 from the Fees and Rhodes Must Fall movement. The sample yielded sufficient and relevant data for the study. Hossain, Alam and Ali, (2024) suggest that by collecting valuable data from participants, considering the quality of the data and the nature of the topic, a reduced number of participants is required. As a result, sufficient information was available to replicate the study based on the depth of the data rather than its numerical value (Sepahvand et al, 2024). This also signified the researcher's saturation, as employing a larger or more extensive audience would not have generated new information thereby ending sample collection (Saunders et al, 2018; Sebele-Mpofu, 2020; Mwita, 2022; Rahimi & Khatooni, 2024).

The participants had the following criteria:

Table 1: Participant criteria: 1976 and 2015-2016

Protest Year	**1976**	**2015-2016**
Gender	14, of which 3 were female and 11 were male	10, of which 3 were female and 8 were male
Student affiliation	7 belonged to a Student Representative Council (SRC), 2 belonged to a Student Christian Movement (SCM) and 2 belonged to both SRC and SCM.	6 belonged to a Student Representative Council, 4 had no affiliation
Median age during data collection	64	28

Profile of participants

The following table gives a breakdown of the profiles of the study participants. The 1976 group is recorded based on their geographic location and not by the school they attended, to protect their identity and illustrate the areas where the protest spread.

Table 2: A breakdown of the 1976 participants

Participant	Geographical Location in 1976	Role in the movement
1	Mamelodi	Student
2	Soweto	Student
3	Soweto	Student
4	Soweto	Student
5	Soweto	Student
6	Soweto	Student
7	Soweto	Student
8	Mamelodi	Student
9	New Brighton	Student
10	Soweto	Student
11	Soweto	Student
12	Soweto	Student
13	Soweto	Student
14	Pietersburg*	Student

*Location concealed to guard the participant's identity.

Sample criteria

The sample criterion was structured and open to any gender, provided they were actively involved in the above-mentioned movements, rather than establishing a random sample from the available community (Hiebl, 2023). In this context, involvement refers to individuals who actively contributed to the success and/or formation of the student protest (Loya & McLeod, 2020). This also includes spreading the message of the protest through word-of-mouth, tweeting about it, preparing posters or placards or developing the concept of the protests such as student committee or Student Representative Council members, by influencing the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of those in their respective communities. The researcher is confident that this sample accurately reflects the pool of South African student activists under study.

Sample Selection - 1976

Considering the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), the researcher encountered difficulties in obtaining the anticipated sample population from institutions

such as the Government Pensions Administration Agency (GPAA) and the Department of Military Veterans (DMV) which keep a register of military veterans. The researcher had considered these departments to be the most feasible means of obtaining access to the study's 1976 participants. As a result, the researcher employed a snowball sampling technique, initiated by a single contact from the GPAA who expressed a willingness to participate in the study. Snowballing enables researchers to generate a pool of participants through referrals made by individuals who share a specific characteristic of research interest with the target population (Crouse & Lowe, 2018). It is used when there is no obvious list of the research population or when there is no other way of accessing the sample (Sharma, 2017). The contact person established communication with other individuals from their youth era which subsequently facilitated the researcher's access to the study's participants. This technique is referred to as "*Exponential Non-Discriminative Snowball Sampling"* (Makwana, Engineer, Dabh & Chudasama, 2023: 767).

Inclusion criteria:

- Active participation in the movement (crafting flyers, sending tweets, recruiting members), not only restricted to the uprising in Soweto but throughout South Africa
- South African residency in 1976
- Black
- Scholars in 1976
- Educated under the Bantu Education system

Exclusion criteria:

- White, Coloured and Indian participants
- Teachers in 1976
- High school students of 1976 who were not active participants in the uprising
- Identified participants in the inclusion criteria that choose to discontinue as participants

Sample Selection – 2015-2016

The researcher used the same snowballing method with the 2015-2016 Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movement activists to access participants.

The following table breaks down the profiles of the study participants. In contrast to the 1976 group, the participant population of 2015-2016 is distinguished by the university name, as the movement's dynamics were different from those of 1976. The table therefore highlights the varied dynamics of the universities involved.

Table 3: A breakdown of the 2015-2016 participants

Participant	Name of University	Abbreviation	Movement	Role in movement
1	University of Cape Town	UCT	RMF	Student
2	University of Cape Town	UCT	RMF	Student
3	University of Cape Town	UCT	RMF	Student
4	University of the Free State	UFS	RMF and FMF	Student
5	University of Stellenbosch	SU	RMF and FMF	Student
6	University of Johannesburg	UJ	FMF	Student
7	University of Johannesburg	UJ	FMF	Student
8	University of the Free State	UFS	FMF	Student
9	University of the Free State	UFS	FMF	Student
10	University of Johannesburg	UJ	RMF and FMF	Student

Inclusion criteria:

- Active participation in the movement (crafting flyers, sending tweets, recruiting members)
- South African
- Black
- University student in 2015-2016

Exclusion criteria:

- University Alumnae before 2015-2016

- White, Coloured and Indian university students in 2015-2016
- University students who did not participate in the Fallism movement
- Identified participants in the inclusion criteria that choose to discontinue as participants

Sample data for content analysis

The study obtained SASO Newsletter copies from the Digital Innovation South Africa website of the University of KwaZulu Natal which is accessible to users at no cost. The sample size consisted of two publications in 1970, four in 1971, five in 1972, one in 1973, zero in 1974, four in 1975 and one in 1976. This equates to 17 SASO Newsletters. Schmidthuber, Willems and Krabina (2022) recommend evaluating the reputation of the data collection source to ascertain its validity. In this instance, the University of KwaZulu Natal is a reliable source because it is a registered academic institution and therefore credible which enhances its reliability. The newsletters were subsequently stored on the researcher's computer to ensure convenient access, eliminating the need for frequent visits to the UKZN website to conduct the research.

In a similar manner to the SASO Newsletters, the researcher saved the tweets pertaining to Rhodes and Fees Must Fall on a Word document, by using and searching for the hashtags #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall, #RhodesHasFallen and #FeesHaveFallen, #RhodesWillFall produced between March 2015 and October 2016. The researcher meticulously reviewed all tweets published within the specified timeframe but focused specifically on those containing the above-mentioned hashtags for the purpose of this study.

4.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation—Thematic Data Analysis

Caulfield (2019) and Braun and Clarke (2023) define thematic analysis as a method that involves reading through a data set and identifying patterns in meaning across the data to derive themes through an analysis of qualitative data that is usually applied to a set of texts such as interviews or transcripts. It was the task of the researcher to examine the data to identify common themes such as topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. Thematic analysis of data can be effectively

conducted by following a six-step approach, as recommended by Caulfield (2019). His suggestion is to familiarise oneself with the data, code it, generate and review the themes, define and name them and ultimately document the findings. Where thematic analysis differs from content analysis is in its search for and identifying of common threads that extend across a set of interviews and, in so doing, it provides a purely qualitative and detailed account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

A thematic analysis was therefore used for the data set to uncover the themes of identity, social change and Black Consciousness as identifiers of change. These patterns were shaped by content that spoke of identity and were used as codes in the research findings. The data obtained from interview responses was processed, transcribed and stored as a Word document which came to a total of 24 transcripts for analysis. The transcripts were examined through a thematic analysis focusing on the careful selection of quotations that directly addressed the research objectives as well as the interpretation of these quotes. Additionally, attention was given to identifying any emerging phenomena within the text
(Naeem, Ozuem, Howell & Rangfagni, 2023). These findings were recorded with prior consent from the participants and coded to convert them into analysable data (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

Secondly, the researcher analysed and coded 17 SASO Newsletters and 67 tweets from the hashtags #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, #RhodesHasFallen, #FeesHaveFallen, #RhodesWillFall and #FeesWillFall according to selected themes guided by the research objectives.

The selected methods of analysis namely content analysis and thematic analysis are not only complementary but also share the same objective of analysing narrative materials from life stories. They achieve this by breaking down the text into smaller units of content and subjecting them to descriptive and interpretive treatment (Braun & Clarke, 2023) This method involved an active process of reflectivity in which the researcher examined their motives, practices and belief systems during the data collection process to remain objective (Naeem, Ozuem, Howell & Rangfagni, 2023). The findings were then categorised according to the main themes or concepts

addressed in the content of the newsletters/tweets (Naeem, Ozuem, Howell & Rangfagni, 2023).

In interpreting the data from interview responses, the researcher focused on the message each participant was conveying to identify meaning in the response. Each of the questions asked was intentional and related to the age and educational background of each respondent and the motivation for participating in the movement. This process of reading, analysing and presenting the data used the six-step format outlined by Mortensen (2020) to identify the patterns and/or themes in the responses. The steps followed were: (1) get familiar with the data; (2) assign preliminary codes to the data to describe the content; (3) search for patterns or themes in identified codes across the different interviews and media; (4) review themes; (5) define and name themes; and (6) produce the report.

Lastly, the use of language, the views of SASO Newsletters and X authors about Black culture, the emergence of an antagonist in the text and the outline of the reader's rights in the text all served as the basis for the codes used to analyse the content from media data. They were applied as follows:

- **Language used to encourage thinking**
  With this, the researcher was looking for emotive descriptions such as the use of inclusive pronouns, such as “we” and “our” with nouns
- **Writer’s opinions about Black culture**
  This was used to identify the intentional use of Black culture or the historical context of African/Blackness in the text. This code sought to reveal the source of consciousness in readers.
- **Formation of an antagonist in the text**
  The code was used to examine the text for the occurrence of antagonists or rivals in the content presented. For example, the use of negative words such as “against us”. With this code, the researcher sought to find the influence of the media in identifying or forming an “*other*” in the minds of media engagers thus positioning itself as a reliable source for information about rivals and allies to the cause.
- **Outline of the reader’s rights in the text**

The research used this code to examine whether the authors of the texts educated their readers about their rights or the authors' views of the reader's rightful position in society. This code sought to identify whether media (SASO Newsletters and RMF/FMF-related tweets) conscientised readers to the need to oppose systems that threatened their position in society.

The researcher interpreted and analysed this textual data by organising codes into meaningful groups to identify patterns and relationships thereby offering insights into the research objectives (Naeem, Ozuem, Howell and Rangfagni, 2023).

4.7 Validity and Reliability

Testing reliability and validity in a qualitative research project can prove to be complicated. However, William (2024) notes that researchers can ensure the accuracy, consistency and validity of their data by designing studies that use valid and reliable measurement tools with clear definitions to minimise bias and error. This also strengthens the integrity of the study.

The researcher, leaning on William (2024), used strategies such as accounting for personal biases, acknowledging sampling bias, meticulously recording data, seeking similarities and differences in the texts, conducting individual interviews, including written descriptions of participants' accounts and demonstrating clarity in thought processes during data analysis and interpretations. The researcher also recorded transcripts and coded data to maintain authenticity and transparency. The transcripts, SASO Newsletters and X feeds are included in the report.

The researcher has safeguarded the credibility of the findings by ensuring that the transcription followed the actual conversation held with participants with no omissions. The transcripts accurately reflect the data collected. The researcher used a "thick description" approach (Seo, 2024) to ensure the trustworthiness and transferability of the data presented. This entails crafting a description so detailed that the reader perceives it as tangible or noticeable. Both interviews and a content analysis of media texts have helped to ensure the credibility of the research findings.

4.8 Ethical considerations

The researcher considers that the study has yielded rich data because it has used two data collection methods which positioned the study to address the weaknesses of one technique through the strengths of the other. By reading the said texts (SASO Newsletters and #RMF/FMF associated tweets), the study has discovered the context behind the two student movements under study which would have been limited by the interview process. This strength augments the weakness of interviews that could be, according to Wolgemuth et al (2015: 353), “emotionally intense, distressful, and sometimes painful”.

Once the study is submitted and examined, the data will be removed from the researcher’s computer. However, should participants wish to receive the findings, a PDF copy of the report will be sent to them by email. Furthermore, the researcher will take the following steps to ensure the protection of the participants and data.

The participant's identity and/or personal information is kept secret. Participant entries have been stored as Participant 1, 2, 3, et cetera to maintain their anonymity and to safeguard their identity. Their personal information has been kept confidential. The researcher used a filing system to keep the findings on her computer. The participants were asked to sign a participation form that outlined the research topic and the terms of participation. This form was used with the dual purpose of protecting their identities and alleviating any apprehensions over the potential exposure of their identities. The data and transcripts will only be shared with the university for the purpose of examination (if required).

Given the sensitivity of the information obtained from respondents, the researcher leaned on the research by Draucker, Martsolf, and Poole, (2009) who profiled distress protocols for research on sensitive topics. The authors state that “individuals who participate in research on traumatic or aversive events, may experience anxiety, depression, embarrassment, or acute stress reactions as they recall, re-examine, and reveal their experiences” (Draucker et al, 2009: 343). They also add that “a review of 12 studies of participants' appraisals of their experiences in trauma-related research revealed that most participants perceived benefits from their involvement, and only a small subset indicated some degree of marked or unexpected upset” (Draucker et al, 2009: 345). The researcher anticipated this outcome from the participants and

mitigated this trauma risk by making use of a distress protocol guided by Draucker et al's, (2009: 345) findings that suggest that:

- Most participants tolerate research on sensitive topics well.
- Most participants find benefit in participating in research on sensitive topics.
- A small group of participants will experience marked or unexpected distress.
- Responses that indicate distress do not necessarily imply harm; and
- Although it is rare, some participants, especially those who are distressed before participation, report negative effects from participation.

The researcher was also steered by the ethical principle of *nonmaleficence* highlighted by Draucker et al*,* (2009) and Jahn (2011). The researcher therefore implemented the following screening process to ensure the safety of participants and prevent any potential harm:

1. Participants were sent a copy of the data-collection tool (the interview questions) ahead of time so that they could familiarise themselves with the contents of the questions and prepare ahead of the actual interview. The questions were open-ended and focused on topics such as their reason for joining the respective movement as well as the source of information acquired from their leaders during the movements.
2. Participants were asked for permission to participate in the study and were informed that their names would not be published to protect their confidentiality which is also supported by Du Plooy (2009).
3. Participants were given the option to meet the researcher in person or to conduct the interview online through a virtual Google Meet link. This gave participants the freedom and power to select their preferred method according to their comfort levels.
4. When approached, participants did not indicate during the interview any need for a mental health professional such a clinical nurse or counsellor. Had they done so, the researcher would have made provisions for a clinical nurse to be present during the face-to-face interview who would have been required to sign a declaration of confidentiality.

5. The researcher informed participants that they had the option to stop the interview at any point they felt uncomfortable which gave them the liberty to “walk-away” if the questions triggered an unpleasant memory.
6. The researcher was also cognisant of signs of discomfort from the participants and was prepared to stop the interview and offer support by allowing the participant time to regroup and/or continue with the interview as advised by Draucker et al*,* (2009).
7. Lastly, the researcher made provision to refer participants who displayed distress, to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), a mental health organisation that provides immediate counselling if the need arose. This is because the researcher anticipated that recollections of traumatic memories associated with the respective movements from participants might be triggered by the questions. She therefore prepared brochures on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from the SADAG website.

The interview process did not bring up any traumatic experiences because participants expressed their willingness to share their experiences. Some participants expressed gratitude for the questions posed and the opportunity to reflect on their experiences. In addition, they expressed gratitude to the researcher for carrying out the procedure with reverence and acknowledgment for the significance of the protest in which they participated.

The primary data was recorded on the researcher’s cell phone for both face-to-face and virtual interviews with the participants’ permission. Participants were given a code number which was used to refer to them during the data collection. However, due to an unforeseen personal emergency, the transcriber was unable to fulfil their duties. Therefore, the researcher had to resort to an alternative online resource called *Cockatoo* to transcribe the interviews. The process was challenging due to the necessity of editing and refining the transcriptions to align with the participants' feedback and ensure accuracy. Therefore, the researcher dedicated time to edit and improve the transcripts meticulously to ensure the accuracy and validity of the collected data.

4.9 Researcher's reflections on field experience

There were some considerable challenges in obtaining data including the initial reluctance from the Fallism students who believed task of their movement remained unsolved and wished to avoid addressing it as a historical event. However, their feelings towards the study changed when they reviewed the interview questions and willingly agreed to participate in the study. In contrast, the students who participated in the 1976 movement demonstrated a strong desire and obligation to correct the existing narratives about their experience and the objectives of the movement which they believed this study would address. There were a few who felt exhausted by the topic due to their belief that they had already made significant contributions to the existing knowledge base, either through media interviews or by writing their own narratives for publication. In the end however, they were amenable to participate in the study and offer new perspectives.

The study and the collection of data was generally pleasant although challenging and weighty because the transcription process was lengthy (due to the unavailability of the transcriber). The duration of each interview varied from 40 to 90 minutes, resulting in an average transcript length of 30 pages. The researcher allowed participants to speak freely and to elaborate their answers as openly as they chose to. This was done to collect as much detailed information from the participants as they were willing to share.. It also allowed the researcher to remain consistent and considerate regarding their experience in order to authenticate the data.

The researcher also observed variations in the content analysis data, indicating disparities in content generation between the two movements under examination. The SASO Newsletters demonstrated a greater inclination towards exploration and detail in their content reporting with publication sizes ranging from 14 to 20 pages encompassing comprehensive and in-depth content. In comparison, X feeds have a character limit of 160, necessitating authors to be concise and convey their opinions using the least number of words. The researcher discovered that authors had to structure their ideas using hashtags which enabled readers to easily determine the subject matter of the tweet. The aforementioned hashtags were associated with the frames categorised under the Fees and Rhodes Must Fall tagline.

4.10 Chapter conclusion

The methodology of the study adopted a constructivism paradigm and selected a non-probability sample for data collection. It employed a qualitative research design to understand and analyse South Africa's student protests. This was done through semi-structured interviews where 24 participants were interviewed. The semi-structured interview style allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions while the conversational nature of the interviews facilitated data collection because it allowed participants to be at ease and to be candid about their experiences. The study also analysed media texts from the SASO Newsletters and Rhodes and Fees Must Fall X feeds. A thematic data analysis method was used to analyse the text from the research samples and codes were derived based on the research objectives in order to facilitate the analysis of the media content present in SASO Newsletters and X.

The researcher opted for a qualitative research method to allow history to speak for itself without tempering with the evidence received from the study participants. The purpose was also to enrich the feedback with existing data so as to merge the two worlds together and present a unified approach to the link between media and identity development. The researcher is of the view that this study would have not achieved this objective if a different method was selected. The adoption of a constructivism research paradigm helped in constructing understanding and knowledge about student activism in South Africa which led to social change in South Africa. This is because the approach considers society to be an organic system of self-regulation that can formulate its ideals and theories based on the interaction with a series of events.

CHAPTER FIVE:

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS – 1976 UPRISING

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the 1976 student movement in line with the research questions and objectives that were developed in the early phases of the current study. It focuses on the findings obtained through interviews with participants in the 1976 student movement, as well as the various media that influenced their identity and outlook on life, such as music, social clubs, and the literature available to them at the time. These are individuals who were actively involved in, created, or led protest movements in their respective educational institutions. The findings are presented in themes which align with the research questions. The chapter also includes an analysis of media content from SASO Newsletters as a tool that contributed to student identity.

The study presents the findings based on themes that align with the following research questions:

1. What led to the consciousness of the activists of the 1976 and 2015-2016 movements?
2. Did the media play a role in conscientising and developing the identity of the movement participants?
3. If so, in what way did the various media play the role of identity formation and consciousness?

5.2 Brief profile of students from the 1976 movement

The group of 1976 comprises high or secondary school students in apartheid South Africa. These are students who, as this study notes, sought to change their social status in the country by engaging in a protest to challenge the education system of the time. They were brought together by a common cause—the need for change and defiance against the Bantu education system that had introduced and imposed Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and learning. The students directed their protest against the education system and aspects of apartheid politics (Majeke, 1994). They came together as a group of students from various schools across Soweto and other

parts of South Africa to protest against the education system and its dominating effects on them and their future (Gerhart, 1994).

This study included participants from various schools, as indicated in Chapter 4. The study presents the findings by using regular font for quotes from written sources (e.g., SASO Newsletters) and italics for participant feedback from interviews. Some direct quotes have been amended for grammatical purposes.

5.3 Themes presented from the findings (1976)

5.3.1 Theme One: ***The underlying motivation for the participation in student movements***

During the process of data collection, the researcher found that a majority of the participants identified with and felt a strong connection to student organisations such as the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the Student Christian Movement (SCM). It was through these bodies that the student group of 1976 was introduced to the philosophy of Black Consciousness.

This assertion is corroborated by Participant 2 who indicated that youth clubs made them aware of a racist government that was coming up with draconian laws that sought to exclude them from participating in the economy. Participant 2 further added that:

> *These bodies played a role in conscientising us. [It was also] through joining the South African Student Movement (SASM), which was an organisation that was established in the secondary schools and high schools.*

The participant confirmed that student organisations played a significant role in influencing the understanding of what it meant to be a Black student and even a Black person in a country that was governed and ruled by White ideas. The philosophy of Black Consciousness spread through the integration of expelled Black Conscious university students as teachers in different high schools nationwide. This finding is also corroborated by Moloi's (2011) and Hlongwane's (2015) research. For example, Participant 7 speaks of the link between high school and university students as not only a solution to their education troubles but also a tool to conscientising students on the ideals of Black Consciousness.

Participant 7 elaborates:

> *University students conducted winter schools during their holidays. It was at these sessions, where we gathered with many other students at the same centre that they (university students) began to discuss and converse about their respective levels of consciousness. They brought that level of consciousness to high schools. [There was a] direct correlation between the activism in universities and in high schools.*

According to Participant 4, Black Consciousness was a motivating factor for the students to take part in these student bodies:

> *White people were describing us in relation to themselves. We were referred to as non-whites. Now what Black Consciousness did was imbue us or to fill us with the sense… of being proud of who we were. It made us recognise that our future or destiny was in our hands. It taught us that if we want to liberate our country, we must first be liberated [ourselves] from those things that make [us] feel inferior – from those things that make us feel like a non-entity in relation to what the White people were trying to do.*

In addition to Participant 4's remarks, Participant 9 described Black Consciousness as Black solidarity. The assertions were supported by Participant 14 who noted that apartheid did not individualise Black people but treated them as a sum-total of the identity of Blackness, suggesting that unity within the Black community was a requirement for total liberation from the system of apartheid. This supports Hosseini's (2022) perspective that identity is an analytical construct based on one's physical characteristics, as apartheid consolidated Black identities based on skin colour.

For Participant 11, Black Consciousness exerted a gravitational pull on the Black student population who were seeking this sense of identity. The participant described it as a philosophy that resonated with them, as if it spoke their language:

> *[It was] …something that talked about our experiences and we embraced it or it embraced us or both, but you know, it was there in the air to take because apartheid was there in the air to oppress us.*

The above narrative, while not explicit, suggests that exposure to student bodies such as SRC and SASM played a role in conscientising students regarding their Black identity, understanding the philosophy of Black Consciousness and developing a strong desire for social change in their country.

5.3.2 Theme Two: ***The role of media in raising awareness and shaping the identity of students—a case study of 1976 student activists***

5.3.2.1 Feedback from interview responses

This study presents the emergence of alternative media as a tool of identity development in the youth of 1976. As noted in Chapter 2, alternative media is defined by as an alternative medium for the dissemination of information (Atton, 2008; Sandoval & Fuchs, 2010; Rauch, 2015). The study also positions mediums such as clothing, culture, literature, poetry and student newsletters as media of communication or in this case, media, according to McLuhan's (2003) definition, also discussed in Chapter Two.

The participants credited themselves as being a reading generation. The finding is that access to books and the knowledge therein was the key to unlocking new forms of thinking in students of 1976.

Participant 8 asserts that the 1976 generation was, in essence, a generation of readers, compared to generations preceding and succeeding them. The participant (8) noted:

> *I must say, contrary to the generation that we see [today], our generation was regarded as bookworms. We used to read a lot. We were very informed and if you come across one of us from that era, you would be surprised by the level of knowledge these people would be speaking out as [you] speak to them [sic].*

The above assertion is further echoed by Participant 7 who acknowledged the use of libraries as a vehicle for generating discussions amongst readers and students to advance new concepts hidden in literature.

Participant 7 explained this as follows:

> *So, Saturdays were all about going to the library to just read. And often, those reading sessions ended with some conversation led by people who I would later get to understand to be part of what became the Black Consciousness Movement.*

The findings suggest that there was a concerted effort by community leaders to engage the youth on political and social issues affecting the community. The study recalls the environment under which this decision was made, namely the enactment of the Publications Act of 1974, which gave the National Party the authority to censor movies, plays, books, and other entertainment shows (Merrett, 2001). Community elders acted outside this law to freely transfer information through oral communication with the goal of stimulating the curiosity of young people within their sphere of influence. This idea was espoused by Participant 1 who noted that the creation of

workshops by Black Consciousness leaders raised awareness about political injustice by the apartheid regime. Participant 1 further explained that:

> *…workshops were there for making people aware and educating people about the system of apartheid and what [it] wanted to achieve.*

Music and oral communication as media

The dissemination of information was not limited solely to written texts. A noticeable number of participants in this study also acknowledged that lyrics in music served as identifiers and catalysts for cognitive changes. Numerous participants expressed a connection with American musicians including Nina Simone, Brooke Benton, Isaac Hayes and Rare-Earth. They also connected with the genre of Reggae whose lyrical content prompted them to perceive life from alternative perspectives. While this is the case, Participant 5 introduced South African musicians into the discussion. The participant focused mainly on Miriam Makeba, an artist who faced a ban in her own country and subsequently relocated to the United States of America to pursue her musical career. Participant 5 recalled:

> *Miriam Makeba's music was very, very influential for me [sic]. It really meant a lot to me. It conscientised me a lot, you know. There are songs… like Khauleza where she talks about the Black woman. I mean, you know, she would sing songs that talk, that were very nostalgic, but that really [talked] to us.*

This finding is supported by Khanyile (2017), who notes that the music scene of the 1970s emphasised the message and ideology of Black Consciousness to the youth in the 1970s. Another media that played a significant role in shaping the identities of participants was oral communication, specifically word of mouth. This involved actively engaging with other students, educators or community leaders who possessed greater knowledge and understanding of the philosophies of change and involvement in debating societies. Participant 3 stated that:

> *Consciousness came in through the debating interaction. We were already highly political entities, although we were young. It was mobilisation, agitation, politicisation that was taking place because the way we were holding debates, was directed at the system [sic].*

These sentiments are validated by Participant 2 who said:

> *We [as student leaders] chose all those political topics in order to empower our students to understand politics, to understand their situation and how to fight back, how to mobilise themselves and challenge the regime from wherever they were.*

Students from outside Soweto who caught the message of activism at a later stage, note the use of banned political radio stations as media of change. These were radio frequencies run by political parties stationed in exile—in countries such as Tanzania and Zambia. Tyali's (2020) report also supports this finding. It states that the ANC created Radio Freedom to secretly disseminate information to its members. Participant 8 recalled:

> *So, over and above reading banned material, we would also, [listen to] Radio Freedom [which was operated by the] ANC guys from Lusaka. We would tune into this station at six o'clock on frequency modulation shortwave 2. It too was also very dangerous, if you [were] found listening to it, but we listened [to it] anyway.*

The use of banned radio stations is supported further by Participant 9 who said:

> *And they read the news and they tell us about the things that are happening here in the country, in June 16 [sic]. They tell us about the things of the world. So that became also another [form] communication.*

However, Participant 9 also said that the reason they too listened to underground or banned radio stations was because they were aware of the "*propaganda*" employed by the national radio stations commissioned to the Black audience known as Radio Bantu. The Participant (9) stated:

> *All of us [Black people] were defined in one word, Bantu. However, Bantu encompassed various ethnic groups such as Bapedi, AmaXhosa, Batswana… et cetera. As a result, we had Bantu radios that spoke Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, IsiXhosa and other languages, collectively known as Radio Bantu. White people were in charge of managing these stations. They had gone to school to speak the local languages of the respective radio stations. They were the ones who [wrote] the news; that means [the Black person hired to read the news] to the listeners, the Sepedi-speaking listeners, was reading the news written by Whites. Therefore, Radio Bantu was, to a certain extent, primarily propaganda against us.*

This finding further supports Tyali's (2020) assertion that [media] during the apartheid era played a crucial role in promoting the existing system of apartheid in South Africa through propaganda. The realisation of inaccurate information from the state meant that students needed other forms of communication among themselves and that they needed to preserve this channel to avoid the influence of external forces such as mainstream media in the example given by Participant 9 above.

The arts as media

Participants 13, 8 and 9 documented additional factors pertaining to the use of clothing by students to establish their own identities within a larger group. They stated that the

use of fabrics such as Dashiki, which was previously frowned upon, was embraced as a symbol of Black Consciousness. This is detailed below by Participant 9:

> *And then we started introducing our African attire, because people, didn't want to wear our African clothes because they were described by White people as ugly and backward. But Black Consciousness came and said, No, no, no, no, no, no. We must go back to our clothes. We are not White people. We are not going to dress like them.*

Participant 13 also recalled the use of T-shirts to distinguish members of different affiliations such SASM from the crowd of other students. The Participant stated that:

> *In other instances, we would wear certain types of T-shirts to identify each other as members of the movement.*

Furthermore, Participant 10 documented the use of theatre performances, art exhibitions and poetry readings in their respective communities as significant elements of change and identity builders. This finding confirms Khanyile's (2017) findings about the impact of the arts through the Medupi Writers Association, an organisation that disseminated the message of Black Consciousness in schools by disguising it as poetry readings and making its campaign appear academic. Additionally, Participants 2, 6, 12 and 14 noted the cultivation of uncombed Afros as a form of resistance and a marker of identity. The combination of art, poetry and the use of hair as a symbol of resistance and identity affirmation was articulated by Participant 12 thus:

> *So, some poets then came out and the formation of poetic groups [began] to manifest in society amongst the oppressed. And suddenly, you know, we [began to portray] ourselves differently. We no longer combed our hair… we were proud, we were no longer cutting our hair, we allowed our afros [to grow], to show that [we] were revolutionary.*

The church as a medium of communication (media)

The study found that churches also fostered political consciousness and transformation through the lens of Black Consciousness. Most participants' enduring recollection of the church is characterised by reverence and admiration. They attributed their positive experiences to the leadership of progressive-minded religious leaders who effectively established a strong basis of faith among the students particularly in the face of social challenges that undermined their presence and value. This finding suggests that the Church played an active role in developing a liberal identity to Christianity and that it was teaching Black Christians a redemptive theology that required them to be their own liberators against an oppressive society. This is further elaborated by Participant 7 who stated:

> *…the Christian movement was big… because we [were] fighting without arms. So, I guess we [had] to arm ourselves somehow, right? We had to arm ourselves from the inside in order to be able to face people who [were] standing with guns while we were standing with nothing, except that we've got a right to exist, we've got a right to be here, and you will listen to us because we are made in God's image.*

It was this profound conviction that served as a unifying force among the students, instilling in them unwavering determination to persist in their pursuit of strengthening their new-found Black Consciousness identity. A collective effort of various media sources such as books and music appear to have shaped the formation of this Christian identity. These sources contributed to their self-perception, challenging the content of the prescribed education system and mainstream media. The finding complements and adds a new dimension to Fisher's (2020) narrative about the students' bravery, facing bullets with dustbin lids, placards and stones. The finding suggests that the Church was active in repositioning a positive and spiritual identity amongst the Black youth who, through organisations such as the Student Christian Movement, took time to teach fellow students about liberation theology, a doctrine for the marginalised to identify with Christ as their redeemer from oppression. The findings suggest that the liberation theory sought to develop Christian activists who would identify with the God they worshipped as an ally and not an adversary. Participant 2 elaborated on this idea:

> *Yes, Christianity played a very, very important role in conscientising us. The church played a very, very important role in South Africa. At that time, we adhered to liberation theology, which advocated for the poor and marginalised Christians to resist oppression. So, we were preaching liberation theology wherever we were in those youth clubs. Then came the Black Consciousness Movement.*

This finding situates the church as a medium of identity development for the students, paralleling the Afrikaners' existing and strong Christian identity (Van Wyk, 2016; Müller, 2019) which may have been perceived as a predominantly White religion by the societies to which they (Black students) belonged. It also corroborates Sono's (1971: 19) assertion that "Black Consciousness [delivered] the reconditioning of the Black man, to unlearn the stereotype that white is the hallmark of God, and that Black is the title badge of evil". The church also seems to have addressed the students' potential cognitive dissonance about being content with affiliation to a "White religion", as it was able to affirm the youth with a faith that outweighed its affiliation.

Literature and newspapers as media

The inclusion of other Black Consciousness movements such as the Black Power movement of the United States of America (USA) found its way to South African students, albeit underground through political influence. The students would receive literature from people in exile who would smuggle it into the country, which would then be handed to one student and then the next in a transfer process referred to as “puff and pass”; a smoking analogy of puffing a cigarette and then passing it on to the next person, because the method entailed reading the content of the literature and passing it on to the next person. The majority of participants shared this theme of clandestine information distribution as a way to access banned literature and/or entertainment.

Participant 6 recalled how they came into contact with banned books after struggling to accept the colour of their skin in comparison to their fairer-coloured siblings who appeared to receive more kindness from their parents. Participant 6 detailed this experience:

> *So, this American influence came up with the Black Power Movement. And then we managed to smuggle the books on Angela Davis, Malcom X… I read a lot about the Black Panthers, Martin Luther King Junior and it broadened my scope of thinking.*

Participant 12 whose recollections of knowledge gathered through clandestine means bordered on the risk of state imprisonment further strengthened the theme of banned literature. This participant stated that the curiosity and drive to understand one’s social situation sustained this desire for knowledge:

> *So, as you grow up, you become aware of all those issues because people talk about them. And for those who can, you even read some books that are too deep. When you read that book, you are told to be careful because you must hide it. You may be arrested.*

The above finding demonstrates that the desire to gain knowledge through banned literature outweighed the associated risk. The risk drew some students to consult more publicly available media such as newspapers which helped them develop their identities.

This finding is illustrated by Participant 11 who stated in part that it was *The World* and *The Weekend World newspapers* that conscientised them. These newspapers were edited by Percy Qoboza, an outspoken critic of apartheid and one of South Africa’s most influential Black newspaper editors who used his platform to speak of the hidden ills of apartheid South Africa (Pather, 1999; Lotter, 2022). Like other participants, Participant 11 identified these newspapers as media that contributed to their

awareness of social differences between the two dominant races (Black and White). Participant 11 also stated that the reporters of these publications were those who sympathised with their plight and met with them secretly to record their stories for publication.

Furthermore, the written form of communication was expanded to include the newsletter of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) which certain individuals remembered obtaining through covert methods. The dissemination of this newsletter was facilitated by persons who retrieved it in printed form and secretly transported it around the country in their luggage. The means of transporting this information typically included trains, buses or coordinated private transportation services disguised as inter-provincial student transportation. According to the account provided by Participant 2:

> *I recall driving back to Jozi [Johannesburg] after passing Louis Trichardt. So, the lady seated next to me, the one who had the driver's license, was no longer a student but was helping us. I said to her, 'you know what? I'm getting a little tired. Come and drive.' She was hesitant, but I managed to convince her. Ten minutes after she assumed the wheel, we encountered a massive roadblock. There were Boers everywhere! We had pamphlets in our boots, among other things!*

The apartheid police did not search their car because they perceived the female driver as more trustworthy, which helped them avoid imprisonment. This reflects not only a concerted effort by students in the 1970s to spread the news about South Africa's political atmosphere but also a deep conviction in the material they used to communicate that message. Thus, SASO Newsletters were a powerful tool for articulating those thoughts to young, receptive students looking for change by any means possible. Participant 9 recorded a specific edition of the newsletter:

> *I've got old journals. I have the SASO Bulletin from July/August 1975, volume 5, number 2. It was 30 cents. It was expensive for us students; I must tell you. One of our leaders gave it to us. He gives you a copy and you give him 5 cents as a deposit. He's going to come and collect 5 cents from you until you finish your 30-cent debt. He trusts us. So, you receive these. You have read this material. Your attitude is also influenced by it. It influences you to Black Consciousness.*

The feedback from Participant 9 reflects the impact of SASO Newsletters. The following section discusses the content of these newsletters.

5.3.2.2 Content analysis of SASO Newsletters and their role in conscientising students

5.3.2.2.1 The language used in SASO Newsletters to stimulate thought

During the analysis of content in SASO Newsletters, the researcher discovered emotive descriptions and identifying elements such as the use of inclusive pronouns with nouns like "we" and "our." The researcher discovered that the SASO Newsletters consistently used words that promoted inclusivity. The SASO Newsletters intentionally used words to denote unity and an integrated approach to tackling the apartheid system. This is seen in the inaugural 1970 August SASO Newsletter in which the writer asserts:

> The oneness of community is at the heart of our cultures. Thus, whereas the White family can stay in an area without knowing its neighbours, Africans develop a sense of belonging to the community within a short time… a manifestation of the interrelationship (SASO Newsletter, August 1970: 17).

One can infer that the writer of this text sought to distance the Black reader from the norms and standards of White communities that they would have been exposed to and thus highlight the positive elements of being Black.

The quote comes from SASO's inaugural newsletter in which writers also sought to define what Black Consciousness meant as well as the role it would occupy in building solidarity amongst the newsletter's readers. This is seen below, as described on page 18 of the August 1970 edition:

> Black Consciousness… wants to ensure a singularity of purpose in the minds of the Black people and to make possible, total involvement of the masses in a struggle essentially theirs (SASO Newsletter, August 1970: 18).

This statement shows a purposeful description of the SASO Newsletter as an identity builder and definer within the Black community. The researcher also found intentional community building projects by SASO in the September 1970 edition in which the writer (on page 3) described the need to educate students and the communities they served on "the art of working together". The role and impact of community development is further outlined in the May 1971 edition by the SRC President of the University of the North (Turfloop), Onkgopotse Tiro (a key figure in the spread of Black Consciousness and the 1976 Soweto uprising). Tiro was appointed at the Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto where he taught history (Gerhard, 1994: 2). Prior to his appointment at the school, he was expelled from the University of the North (Turfloop) for his politically loaded speech at a graduation ceremony where he questioned the segregated education system in South Africa). He wrote:

> …I am confident of the effectiveness of SASO policy and its role in constructing an active Black community… we are all opposed to being treated as objects and being denied the human dignity we deserve as a nation (SASO Newsletter, May 1971: 8).

Tiro's words in this text support the study's finding that the active description of building a Black community was at the heart of not only SASO but also the Black Consciousness Movement. It is perhaps the text found on page 9 of the June 1971 edition that placed community development and the understanding of a unified Black population at the forefront of the task of Black Consciousness. It reads as follows:

> These community development projects should not be seen only as another opportunity "to do a good turn" in the charitable idiom of the boy scouts, but an involvement with the people in self-reliance and facing the challenging issues [that Black people contend with] … [they are meant] to give students an opportunity to relate intimately with the community and locate mass solidarity this is Black consciousness at work (SASO Newsletter, June 1971: 9).

The data suggests that the goal of SASO was to restore confidence and respect of Black culture, norms and traditions in Black communities through its newsletter. The underlying theme for this code is the continuous appearance of identity formation in words such as "our Blackness is inseparable from our humanity… [it] is the truism of Black Consciousness" which is found in the January 1972 edition. In it, the writer stated on page 7:

> We must remember that group solidarity is the **sine qua non** [necessary or indispensable requirement (McCarthy, 2021)] of psychological and physical liberation of the oppressed (SASO Newsletter, January 1972: 7).

This is interpreted here as a reminder to the Black population that they were first and foremost oppressed, and that oppression was the unifying symbol of being Black in South Africa. The study further deduced from this text that the writer wanted to communicate to the reader that liberation from oppression would only be possible if it was attacked in unison by the Black population, specifically the Black students at university level who were tasked with delivering their respective communities out of oppression.

This was not only limited to community development but also the recognition and questioning of the quality of education that these students and possible SASO members were subjected to. The study's view is motivated by the writer of the March 1972 edition of the SASO Newsletter who on page 8 wrote:

> [Is this] education leading us to liberation or to perpetual servitude and wretchedness? (SASO Newsletter, March 1972: 8).

The golden thread of this argument is perhaps revealed in the theme of challenging readers to identify themselves as an oppressed group, followed by the emphasis to see themselves beyond their status quo by questioning the tools with which they would liberate themselves. Therefore, the question of education and the system upon which it was built become a sustained theme in the SASO Newsletters from 1972.

This is seen in the May/June 1975 edition in which the writer asserts:

> We appreciate the need for Blacks acquiring their own identity against the forces of white domination. We appreciate, as students, [an] education that is geared for liberation. We appreciate social progress in the Black community (SASO Newsletter, May/June 1975: 17).

In the statement above, education is echoed as the cornerstone of liberation and is identified as a tool to achieve physical and psychological liberation as alluded to in the January 1972 edition. As the newsletter matured, the two themes of identity development and education are refined and combined to display them as a single source of liberation. Specifically, from a student's perspective as they were defined as key role players in community development. The above finding is described in the July 1975 edition in which the writer notes:

> The role of our students in our universities is to proclaim the truth at all times, irrespective of the consequences thereof. It is high time we reject these institutions because they tend to give us a false sense of security. They are a part of the oppressive machinery (SASO Newsletter, July 1975: 5).

To provide context to the above text, the writer of the article was addressing the constant banning and expulsion of Black Consciousness students from universities not only to quell activism and open demonstrations against the education system by the students but also to instil fear in the remaining students so that they refrain from the teachings of Black Consciousness. The writer described the higher education institutions as "oppressive machinery", noting that they were the vehicles that the apartheid regime was using to provide a diluted form of education to Black students. The "false sense of security" alluded to in the text speaks to the falsified version of education that was designed to prepare Black graduates for sub-standard work. This will be seen as the themes progress in this chapter.

Lastly, a recurring theme is the introduction of Black theology. This also supports the finding that the Church was an identity builder to help define an inclusive religion and deity to students who may have identified themselves as Christian but lacked the

scriptural basis to latch on to that would help solidify that identity. In the November 1975 edition, the writer stated that:

> Black theology tries to make sense of the particular Black experience of suffering and oppression from rampant white racism in light of God's revelation in Jesus. It is a theology of liberation. [A] theology of the oppressed. It affirms the personhood of the oppressed and asserts God's offer of salvation to them (SASO Newsletter, November 1975: 16).

An analysis of the language that SASO writers used in their newsletter has revealed that the use of inclusive pronouns such as "we" and "our" was prevalent and could be regarded therefore as a tool of identity formation for the students who read the newsletter. The study concludes that the newsletter's content, which defined Black identity and what its population needed liberation from, challenged students to be resolute in their quest for liberation.

5.3.2.2.2 Opinions about Black culture in SASO Newsletters.

The study identified intentional references to Black culture or the historical context of African/Blackness in the text, revealing the origins of readers' consciousness. The newsletter emphasised the idea that Black people lacked a rich historical context, thereby defining the roots of identity theft and displacement. This text is found on page 17 of the August 1970 edition:

> … people without a positive history [are] like a vehicle without an engine. They always live in the shadow of a more successful society (SASO Newsletter, August 1970: 17).

The study deduces from this text that the writer was defining the psychological or intellectual position of the members of the Black race against that of their White counterparts who, as the findings in the previous section shows, had a firmer grasp of their own history versus what was being communicated to Black students from textbooks.

The writer in the September 1970 issue continued this thought but on a positive note, citing the contribution of the African continent to the world. The author described this contribution as a gift of culture, human relationships (relatability) and knowledge of how the world works. The author of this text contends that this gift was the reason that the White person wanted to “enjoy African for himself” [sic]. The text reads as follows:

> Africa's gift to world culture may be in the realm of Human Relationships… we have been much nearer to the heart of things than our Western teachers (SASO Newsletter, September 1970: 14).

The above text asserts that Africans are more connected to nature and humanity than the isolated cultures in the West. It aligns with a previous theme that defined Black people as a holistic race. Readers are encouraged to see themselves within the context of their identity which is demonstrated in light of the support they were receiving from White liberal student groups at their respective universities to end the apartheid system. The text reads as follows:

> Black students are part of an oppressed whole and are entitled to see White students as part of the oppressor. Black students are busy redefining themselves... (SASO Newsletter, May 1971: 11)

The statement encouraged students to redefine and be comfortable with their Black identity rather than align with White liberals advocating for Black student liberation in South Africa. Furthermore, readers who had access to the September 1970 edition where explicitly discouraged to accept help from liberals as they were probably masquerading their fear of a united Black race, as support for the Black students. The writer thus stated:

> Yet at the back of [the White liberal's] mind is a constant reminder that he is quite comfortable as things [the apartheid system] stand and therefore should not bother about change. Although he does not vote for the [Nationalist Party] he feels quite secure under the protection offered by them [Nationalist Party] and subconsciously shuns the idea of change (SASO Newsletter, September 1970: 18).

The idea that the liberal was afraid of change or reluctant to enforce it is supported by the text in the August 1971 edition which emphasised the White community's denigration of the Black person's image and identity. The writer sought to remind the Black person not to forget the historical role adopted by the Whites in the construction of what Blackness represents:

> ...the Whiteman *[sic]* has robbed the Blackman *[sic]* of his culture, of his identity and of himself. Now that the Blackman no longer has a self, he aspires for a white self. There is an inner cry in the Black intellectual to be judged by White norms, values and standards (SASO Newsletter, August 1971: 9).

The text emphasises the importance of defining oneself against one's Black identity rather than seeking comfort from a White perspective and it encourages acceptance of Blackness as an intentional design by the Creator. This thought was illustrated in the August 1971 edition which reads:

> We make no apology for our colour. We have realised that the Creator took time and tide to produce the colour we possess by His grace. All the elements of beauty and perfection are ours and we envy no other (SASO Newsletter, August 1971: 7).

There are recurring themes of encouragement in the newsletters, which aimed to reinforce the notion that Africans possess an inherent peaceful disposition, while dismissing what the media portrayed as propaganda and fabrication. Two texts, originating from two different publications with a three-year gap vividly illustrate this concept. The first is from the May 1972 edition which states:

> Essentially, Black students are peaceful and orderly despite a myriad of arbitrary provocations heaped on them (SASO Newsletter, May 1972: 7).

In the above example, the writer was responding to the emergence of Black students who had gradually begun to protest the standard and quality of education after Onkgopotse Tiro's expulsion from the University of the North. The SASO writers encouraged such proactivity through their newsletter, hoping it would eventually persuade the Bantu Education minister to alter his stance on the educational content for Black students.

This finding is supported the following text that encouraged student proactivity:

> Indoctrination through the wide dissemination of propaganda and poisonous education and failure to put things in their correct perspective, convince many weak Black minds that nothing can be done about the situation (SASO Newsletter, May/June 1975: 11).

The text above presents a different viewpoint on the challenges Black students encountered in choosing between protesting and remaining within the educational system without causing disruptions to their curriculum. However, the writer called such students “weak Black minds”, as they failed to see the education system from a correct perspective. The text also introduces the mainstream media as a contributing factor to how Black people viewed themselves. The text describes mainstream media as a tool that reshaped Black people's self-perception of, and their expectations in navigating the social and economic world, particularly with the introduction of advertisements in newspapers and magazines that targeted Black readers. The writer discussed the role of the mainstream media in the November 1975 edition thus:

> Advertisements in newspapers and magazines which are directed at Black people place emphasis on social and economic status. The social and economic status of a person is ascribed to the advertised product. In most cases the advertised products are skin lightning and hair straightening creams. We therefore find that in their (Black consumers) aspirations to acquire social status, they endeavour to change their physical appearance. These advertisements also create an individualistic attitude in

> the Black man *[sic]*. This results in the Black man no longer concerning himself with returning his human dignity but rather with [improving] his material situation, even at the expense of other Blacks (SASO Newsletter, November 1975: 11).

The text was perhaps the culmination of SASO's enduring description of, and education about the attack on the culture and pride of Blackness, assisted by the presence of such advertisements in mainstream media that sought to mirror a different and White image to Black media users. Not only did the writer condemn the use or desired use of these products but he also explained why the advertisements should not be ingrained in the mind of Black readers. The advertisements prevented the Blacks from focusing on restoring their human dignity, but rather on improving their material situation even at the expense of other Blacks. As a result, the writer reminded the reader to return to Black Consciousness and reject the suggested aspiration for whiteness, because it further drove them to live under the "shadow" of whiteness or a culture they could falsely consider better than their own. This statement reflects Serpe's (1987:45-46) view of identity development as relying on the relationship between an individual, his/her society (social structure) and the person's role performance as perceived through societal norms.

The idea of condemning White as a better race is concluded in the March/April edition of 1976 in which the writer lamented that "…myths have been created about Blacks, and the unfortunate thing is that most Blacks end up believing these falsities" (SASO Newsletter, March/April 1976: 14).

The writers of SASO Newsletters defined and described the impact of the media as a tool for raising awareness and shaping the identity of students in both SASO Newsletters and in their profiling of print media in their communities.

5.3.2.2.3 Formation of antagonists in the text

The sub-theme of antagonists reflects findings from the examination of the text for the occurrence of antagonists or rivals in the content presented, for example, the use of negative words such as "against us". The researcher found that the newsletters identified or formed an "other" in the minds of SASO readers by positioning themselves as a reliable source of information about rivals and allies to the cause of freedom and Black Consciousness.

SASO Newsletters defined the state, apartheid regime, media and even security police as opponents of Black culture and architects of division between racial groups. In the August 1970 edition, the publication opened with the emphasis on the distorted origins of materials used to depict and characterise Black individuals by the state. The text reads:

> Needless to say, their source of information is ill-informed and deliberately distorted accounts of events, as reported in South African newspapers and other agencies of government propaganda (SASO Newsletter, August 1970: 1).

By reinforcing the image of the Black race, the text frankly emphasises the role of propaganda and the media in communicating with the South African population. According to the researcher, this definition challenged the way SASO readers interacted with newspapers and helped them to question media content as fact.

The writers frequently referenced the use of state-owned newspapers (mainstream media) as a propaganda tool, perhaps to bring into context the power they wielded in the minds of their readers. This assertion is supported by the text in the September 1972 edition which states:

> The white press knows fully well of course that it is to their advantage to misdirect the attention of the Blacks (SASO Newsletter, September 1972: 20).

The above writer suggests that newspapers were engaging in a subtle yet forceful assault on the identity and sense of belonging of Black readers because at that point, the establishment of independent Homelands [*areas to which the majority of the Black population was moved to prevent them from living in the urban areas of South Africa* (SAHO, 2019)] was a prevalent theme in the media. However, it was also an idea that SASO vehemently rejected because it deemed the homelands as “nothing else but sophisticated concentration camps where Black people [were] allowed to ‘suffer peacefully’" (SASO Newsletter, September 1972: 21).

SASO Newsletter writers suggested that the actions of the apartheid regime were motivated by fear, as the leaders were apprehensive about the potential retaliation and anger from the Black population. There are recurring themes in the findings that substantiate this claim by SASO writers. An instance of this can be found in the March 1973 edition, which mentions a SASO event that aimed to address the detention of eight SASO members and/or Black Consciousness activists by the apartheid

government. The event also aimed to discuss a plan of action to overcome the suggested form of intimidation employed by the government. The text states that:

> The white power structure found our 8 [banned Black consciousness] brothers to be too strong for them. They were afraid of them; they are still afraid of them. Fear controls their actions… [they] are afraid to let our brothers defend themselves for they (the government) are aware of the truth they speak - on our behalf. There can [therefore] be no cry against racists, no denouncing of the power structure. We know that they [the apartheid government] are the evil ones… (SASO Newsletter, March 1973: 9).

The writer highlighted the prominent role of the apartheid state in oppressing and devaluing the lives of Black people in South Africa and aimed to inform the reader about the underlying reasons for the state's actions, which were rooted in fear. The writer however provided an anecdote to this fear by urging the readers to take possession of and pride in the colour and identity of their skin.

Lastly, the writers of the newsletters made the following observations regarding the perception that the security police was a tool of oppression against the Black community, an enforcer of violence and a source of uncertainty in Black people's lives:

> One must look at the huge security force that South Africa has in order to realise this. These men [security police] must always report something to their masters in order to justify their employment (SASO Newsletter, September 1972: 10).

The text implies that even if a security officer were to find a Black neighbourhood peaceful, he would instigate a scenario or charge to detain someone in order to have something to report to his employers. This suggests that the method of policing was erratic and subjective if the need to validate employment took precedence over law enforcement. The researcher finds that this link to the security force is consistent with the study's quest to establish the role of social structures (discussed in 5.3.3) as contributors to the identity development of the youth of 1976.

The structures of security police, fear, media and the apartheid state (Fleetwood, 2008; Merolla et al, 2012) culminated in the excerpt from the June 1971 edition in which the writer, being fully aware of what the apartheid system was doing to freedom fighters or challengers of the apartheid government, stated:

> These apartheid institutions [Robben Island, banning orders, exile] are swallowing too many good people who would be useful in a meaningful programme of emancipation of the Black people (SASO Newsletter, June 1971: 12).

Thus, the sub-theme (identifying the formation of antagonists in SASO texts) has demonstrated the correlation between protest and identity within South African student movements.

5.3.2.2.4 Outline of the reader's rights in the text

The sub-theme of the readers' right was identified to help determine whether the authors of the texts educated their readers about their rights or expressed their views about the readers' rightful position in society. It sought to determine whether SASO Newsletters effectively raised awareness among readers about the importance of resisting systems that were in conflict with their social position.

The researcher found that an integral part of the SASO Newsletter's objective was to educate students about their rights as Black individuals and as citizens of the African continent. The writers employed an active voice to inform readers about the meaning of apartheid and its implementation. The September 1970 edition provides a clear illustration of this, as the author explicitly stated that:

> In South Africa, the policy of separate development must be seen purely as an ideology. The separation itself is not so much the ultimate of political action as it is the pretext and false front behind which the element [of] power, inherent in all politics, is concealed (SASO Newsletter, September 1970: 8).

The text suggests that apartheid was not just a political position but also a facade and a belief system that influenced the power dynamics between Black and White people. Secondly, most writings condemned the lack of positive information about Africa, its countries and its people thus creating a vacuum about the presence of fellow (potentially sympathetic) Black people and instead building in the minds of South Africans a population ravaged by war and incapable governments run by other Black leaders. Most African states had gained independence from their colonial rulers a decade earlier and they were gradually taking over the political reins of the nations from previous heads of state (Everett, Hardick & Johnson, 2020):

> We in the Southern tip of Africa often get twisted and inaccurate accounts of the Black and Arab scene in Africa. We are given the picture of inchoate and simply tribal societies where barbarism and …war reign supreme. African governments are portrayed as inept and corrupt... (SASO Newsletter, August 1970: 10).

The aforementioned text criticises the portrayal of African states as "inchoate and tribal societies" and corrects the view to reflect a continent of capable and progressive

people. This highlights the apartheid state's bias in reporting fairly on the capabilities of Black-led countries.

The above observation has significance for identity development, as the writers framed a distinct Black individual in contrast to the state's active perception. They deliberately affirmed their readers' rights and the extent of opposition to the apartheid system, as demonstrated by the writer in the June 1971 edition:

> I accept that they can make or break me, but this recognition of their power will never force me to accept them as my true Government because I have taken no part in putting them where they are (SASO Newsletter, June 1971: 2).

The above text acknowledges the power and impact of the government, while also denying its capacity to coerce an individual to comply with its demands. The writer implies that despite the apartheid state's authority, it was unable to exert control over a person's identity or the person's capacity to reject the state as an authority in their lives. The researcher found that the writings in these newsletters constantly point to the power that Black people inherently possess, urging them to use it as their primary motivation for pursuing change:

> We must now rely on our own resources to stimulate change and activate our hopes and potentialities. This message is inherent in the Black Consciousness Ideal (SASO Newsletter, September 1971: 14).

This article proposed liberation from relying on outside forces or individuals to initiate their liberation from the apartheid regime. It urged the readers to introspect and seek their own progress and freedom from oppression, guided by the principles and ideology of Black Consciousness. The researcher found that SASO Newsletters consistently incorporated the theme of education throughout their content, suggesting that the writers were constantly mindful of their target audience as well as their responsibility to provide stimulating ideas that would inspire their readers' thinking.

An example is found in the language below that not only indicates the rise of student protests mentioned earlier but also suggests that the fight was present on campus where the teaching was labelled as "educational genocide" against Black students who were being taught to look at life through a White lens but also that the fight occurred in everyday life:

> Black students are increasingly resisting efforts to get them to cooperate in their own educational genocide. No longer can they be contained by white rhetoric… to learn from our young people that the revolution is not over, and it is not just beginning, it's

> continually with us. [Our] struggle is [an] educational struggle" (SASO Newsletter, May 1972: 15).

The researcher discovered that the writings of SASO, which promote the message and validity of Black Consciousness, consistently explored the theme of breaking the mould of White superiority, not only in the educational setting but also in the everyday lives of Black individuals in South Africa. One of the writers explained this as follows:

> That is why we, the protagonist of Black Consciousness, in the vanguard role that the youth of all oppressed nationals play, have decided to break the myth of white-race superiority (SASO Newsletter, May 1975: 3).

The researcher contends that the constant reference to "breaking" the myth or power of the White race was in turn building the validity and strength of the Black race to which the readers of SASO belonged. It is an intentional use of words to promote the ideology of Black Consciousness and power of the Black people of South Africa to actively pursue their freedom from apartheid:

> … We all need to learn what our power is and how to exercise it. We shall all need to know what distinguishes our Power from colonial power (SASO Newsletter, July 1975: 12).

The study posits that the findings related to the education of the SASO readers on the rights of Black people serve as a means to construct their identity and to establish the goals and objectives for which they should strive to attain freedom. Freedom is not presented as an unrealistic concept that would occur without any effort but rather as an attainable objective achieved through proactive decision-making based on knowledge and the ability to seize freedom decisively.

The following text encapsulates this concept, emphasising the importance of high-quality education and its cascading impact on the progress, autonomy and self-reliance of those who benefit from it and their communities:

> Blacks in this country hanker for education – education not for domestication but education that aims at making the millions of down-trodden Blacks self-reliant and free from the oppressive strains perpetrated by the racist government of South Africa (November 1975: 12).

The text also criticises the ultimate objective of Bantu education which, according to Khumalo (2022), aimed to subdue Black students and perpetuate their poverty and subordination within the White economic structure. The researcher asserts that SASO Newsletters skilfully shaped the cognitive development of its readers regarding their status as South African citizens and the significance of being aware of their rights in

order to navigate strategically towards liberation from the oppressive regime of apartheid.

5.3.2.3 Mainstream media's portrayal of the 1976 students

The theme of a group of students burning and vandalising state-owned property engulfed the media, as it sought to present the news of these events. Hoffman and Pompper (2020) highlight the practice of mainstream media to operate under the news value criteria of audience, impact, proximity, timeliness, prominence, unusualness and conflict. In 1976, when apartheid was an established structure, the idea of young Black people opposing it was presumably newsworthy because the stance the youth took was impactful, unusual and conflicting with what the apartheid regime sought to convey to the world which was a peaceful and harmonious co-existence of separate development between South Africa's various racial groups. The regime had the power of mainstream media, as confirmed by Chimutengwende (1978) and noted in Chapter 3. Participant 5 also confirmed that mainstream media was controlled by the state:

> *Remember the media was largely controlled by White people. So, some newspapers would write what was required of them to write, so the truth would never really be portrayed.*

In addition to print media, radio emerged as a prevalent media outlet among Black media consumers due to its widespread accessibility. The findings reveal that the means of controlling the media ensured intentional curatorship of information to the masses. Most participants expressed the overall feeling that the media chose to portray a negative view of students who publicly opposed apartheid, its policies and the education system. There were numerous accounts of this in the findings including the statement by Participant 13:

> *We were portrayed as naïve people… without brains. The impression the government had was that the youth could not do what they did on their own, that the influence came from the journalists in our area. We were not portrayed as agents of our own thoughts.*

Other participants described their branding by the media as "stone-throwers". This title was published each time mainstream media wrote about them, without objectively considering the reason for the students' discontent. Participant 10 described this form of reporting below:

> *I was portrayed in uncomplimentary terms; as a troublemaker, Tsotsi-thug, klipgoier (stone thrower), potential criminal. I was thought of as non-being and without human agency. Fighting for liberation was criminalised.*

However, such portrayal was not limited to newspapers and radio. Participant 9 mentioned the use of entertainment media such as comic strips and magazines that targeted Black communities to influence the minds of readers regarding their identity:

> *There was a magazine called She, another called Chunky Charlie, and one called Samson. Now this She, is a strong [Black] muscular woman, who walks with confidence and is aggressive. She is portrayed as someone guys want to touch. So, she kicks and beats all these guys around her. This magazine was showing us a strong powerful woman beating men all over the town. All we saw, throughout the magazine, were images of her beating men. The magazines portrayed Black men, as people who harass women, who have to be beaten.*

Participant 9 further noted that the narratives they encountered about Black individuals in mainstream media were characterised by violence, undesirability and malice. Mainstream media depicted them in an unappealing manner, while additionally embracing commercial placements from companies that marketed products claiming to "remedy" Blackness. The aforementioned products were advertised strategically alongside the unfavourable narrative in order to provide Black readers with a “viable solution”. Participant 9 elaborates:

> *They portray negative stereotypes about you, but they also offer an alternative perspective. They don't want you to be Black, they want you to be White. Along the story of denigration here, there will be an advertisement next to the story about a cream. The narrative depicts a denigrated individual on this side, while an advertisement adjacent to the story features a person who appears pink, resembling a White individual.*

The viewpoints expressed above correspond to the findings in SASO Newsletters that discussed the same concept of advertising skin-lightening creams in newspapers. The findings indicate that the ideology and principles of Black Consciousness extended beyond the student population. The impact extended to communities, encompassing the media fraternity consisting of journalists residing in those communities. Participant 11 spoke of the journalists as people who:

> *…played a very critical role. They reported objectively and independently as the way things were*.

These journalists worked under the leadership and editorship of Percy Qoboza at *The World* and *Weekend World* newspapers. The findings demonstrate how the Black Consciousness philosophy transformed them and inspired them to write candidly about what they witnessed in the townships. Participant 14 described these journalists as follows:

> *The (mainstream) media in the 70s was also divided but what really stood out was we had Black journalists who began to report with passion about the issues coming from Black people and Black townships... That stood out. And they were researching very informative content and unapologetically reporting about issues that were happening within the Black townships. That mainstream media has a lot of respect from us. Some of them, did wonderful things. [That type of storytelling] was inevitably influenced by Black Consciousness and Pan Africanist journalists. You could see it, even when you read it. They stood firm, they were presenting a positive image of us.*

The findings show that the inclusion of Black journalists in the media industry provided a significant level of representation for the Black public including the students of 1976. Those journalists successfully rectified the inaccurate narratives circulated by mainstream media which predominantly represented White perspectives. They constructed a more accurate portrayal of Black experiences and the events in the Black communities. Despite working for mainstream media, the opinions and reporting style of the journalists appear to be similar to those of the writers of the SASO Newsletter who purposefully departed from the mainstream media's stance on Black people.

5.3.3 Theme Three: ***Link between social protest and identity in the context of South Africa's social structures***

5.3.1 Social structure of apartheid

It is important to explain adequately the concept of social structures because they form the foundation of what this study seeks to explore. The establishment of social structures including laws, regulations, social class, race and education (Merolla et al 2012) had a significant impact on the identities of the youth in 1976. Social structures established the basis for the reasoning behind the protest actions in which the youth actively challenged the macro social structure of the South African apartheid government (Rosnes, 2019).

Participant 12's decision to protest against the apartheid regime was motivated primarily by the comprehensive nature of its structure and policies. The participant spoke of a childhood that exposed them to the inequalities of the system, especially when their school visited a White Catholic school in the Johannesburg suburbs. While there, they witnessed the privilege enjoyed by the students such as a fully equipped science lab where students could experiment with elements and chemicals that helped

them observe the effects of scientific experiments. Participant 12 noted the sheer sense of deprivation they felt when they realised that their lot was to memorise the effects that chemicals had on each other, as opposed to seeing the product and engaging with it from start to finish. The experience solidified their discontentment with the apartheid regime and the choice of education that was allocated to Black students. Participant 12 shared that:

> *The totality of apartheid is difficult to talk about. You are forcefully politicised. As a student, you interact with other students and learn about their problems. Some of these issues are familiar to you, while others are beyond your control. That's why I say you become politicised, seeking to align yourself with like-minded individuals to prevent these issues from happening.*

The above finding exemplifies Anderson's (2020) argument that the emphasis of Bantu education should have been on training rather than education, as the former would have kept the Black students in their place as labourers and eliminated any aspirations to emulate the "white boss."

The findings suggest that the establishment of the SASM Action Committee which, according to Participant 12, consisted of student representatives from various high and secondary schools in Soweto, played a significant role in mobilising students to transition from protesting in classrooms to the streets. According to Smith (1998), social structures comprise various elements including ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes and demographic groups. The inference is that the Action Committee was a social structure in which students found refuge. It served as the culmination of the students' collective knowledge and experiences, providing a platform for fostering a shared identity among the students and facilitating their collective action against the oppressive apartheid regime. Participant 4's account offers a more detailed insight into the specific functions and contributions of the Action Committee that manifested as the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC):

> *In March or April 1976, the South African Student Movement (SASM) took a resolution from its general council to say, we need to support or actively participate in this enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. A meeting took place at the DOCC on the 13th of June. In that meeting, there were representatives of students from the different high schools in Soweto. The group decided to plan a peaceful march for the 16th of June. Now, the individuals that were there had each school represented and then those individuals took the information to their respective schools.*

The embodiment of the information each student carried over months of learning and developing a new identity in the form of Black Consciousness emboldened the

students to act in unison against the enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. The majority of students took to the streets to display their disapproval of the enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. However, it also became evident that students had grown weary of the apartheid system's oppression which aimed to impede the intellectual advancement of the Black community. Participant 7 asserted that despite their group's eminent departure from the school system, they mobilised themselves on behalf of students in lower grades to resist the imposition of Afrikaans in the school system. The participant stated that:

> *The issue of Afrikaans was becoming even more pertinent and more urgent as it started as a pilot project, but it was graduating to be the policy of Bantu education. Most of us, as members of SASM, were finishing high school at that time, so it didn't really directly affect us (the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction). But because we grew up so conscious about being African children and being part of the African community. It affected younger people coming behind us and therefore it affected us because it would delay us as a people from progressing. And it would begin what we saw as an onslaught on our culture, our ways of being, so we just saw an intention to delay our growth, but also to dominate our cultures.*

The aforementioned statement aligns with Rosnes' (2019) research on the introduction of Bantu education as a trial programme to validate the Eiselen Commission's recommendations. Students gravitated towards a collective identity and persuasion through a Black Consciousness lens to seek change and fairness in the education system, ultimately uniting them to strive for change. For others such as Participant 5, the transformation from complacency to activism happened overnight after SASM student leaders visited their school in Meadowlands to inform them about the need to stand as a collective against the education system. Participant 5 recalled hearing for the first time someone who spoke with a deep sense of conviction and eloquence about issues that affected them personally, namely Tsietsi Mashinini who was the leader of the SASM, president of the SSRC, leader of the student march on 16 June 1976 and the most wanted young person in South Africa following the march (Maphunye, 2017). Participant 5 elaborated on their experience as follows:

> *I joined because I was informed. You know, Tsietsi Mashinini was a very, very, very vibrant leader. We didn't know him. We didn't know that there was a movement. But just after he addressed us for the first time at our high school… to sort of give context, give us the background, tell us what was happening… just after that address, I just felt like, you know what, this is the way to go. Because he was telling us about the real problems that we knew, the real problems that we were experiencing. But he was also conscientising us about things that we were not really aware of. He started explaining things and explaining how the language was [being] used to indoctrinate us and how it was disadvantaging us with our studies.*

5.3.2 Social structure of the Bantu education system

The implementation of Afrikaans in schools was recognised as a harmful imposition. This study posits that the apartheid approach to education was founded on the principle of developing people according to their customs and/or knowledge. This position is influenced by Ardèvol-Abreu's (2015) perspective on development which defines it as the process of integrating and recalling information by maintaining the consistency of a group's knowledge and interpretive frameworks. When students realised the harmful imposition of Afrikaans in their schools, they were instilled with courage and boldness to confront the South African government of that time. Participant 1 recalled how they were moved to action by this thought and by the desire to eradicate the enforcement of Afrikaans in their education:

> *… We realised that what we need to do is to fight for our rights because we could not accept Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. We were so brave that even when we faced the soldiers, the police; we told ourselves that if they kill us, it is fine, if we survive, it is still fine…*

The Bantu education system was well co-ordinated to ensure compliance by the schools, as narrated by Participant 8, whose school had white inspectors that went into the townships to monitor the progress of the Afrikaans project. The participant (8) recalled the collection and monitoring of top-performing students amidst a struggling group of teachers who themselves were not familiar with the Afrikaans language, let alone equipped to teach in it. This sample, they say, was intended to serve as a source of motivation for the incorporation of Afrikaans in Black schools, highlighting its potential as a feasible and beneficial endeavour attainable to all. Participant 8 noted that:

> *Our lessons were given in English and all of a sudden in April 1976 we were told from now henceforth all the subjects will be taught in Afrikaans and they started teaching in Afrikaans. And you must also know that in those days, even a lot of inspectors were White. They would select a few students who seemed to be excelling in that subject and then they'll be the sample… representing the school to say if these students are doing that well then it would be assumed that the rest of the students are expected on average to be good or fair or something like that depending on the judgment.*

The Afrikaans model and project implemented in the Bantu education system appeared to have been carefully premeditated and co-ordinated to achieve its anticipated outcomes. Gallo (2020) affirms that while Black teachers opposed this education system, they were not given much choice on the matter because

unemployment was the consequence of their opposition. However, the findings show that the enforcers of Bantu education had not considered the response and reaction of those it was targeting. Although the government intimidated the teachers, expecting them to follow the regulation without question, it did not anticipate that the students, who would be directly affected by it, would speak up against it without the fear of their teachers.

Participant 11 concurred with Participant 8's observations that educators struggled to instruct in Afrikaans, given their own lack of exposure to the language and their college education in English. The battle against teaching in Afrikaans caused some of them to resign. This participant (11) added that Afrikaans was associated with oppression:

> *We associated Afrikaans with the oppressor and so the reason we chose to protest was to stop it from being implemented, although we were halfway in the year, we had already battled with it from the start of that year and then in June, we said no, enough is enough...*

Thus, the students' realisation of the Bantu education social structure which used Afrikaans as the main language of instruction drove them to their decision to call for its abolition. Participant 10 noted that the recognition of that particular structure produced a sense of misery because they recognised that the education system to which they were subjected served as the origin of their suffering and unease even in the affirmation of their Blackness:

> *The system wanted us to believe that something was wrong with our Blackness. [But], instead of running away from our Blackness, we embraced it. Attention [was] then directed against the government using our Blackness... The energy to end our misery set in [and our] fight was then directed to the authors and beneficiaries of that misery… the abhorrent education system [we were] exposed to was what [we] knew and resented. This resentment made us protest against the education system of the time by joining other students.*

However, the formation of SASM as a student body did not come without trial. The testimony of Participant 4 reveals that prior to its formation, there were other youth bodies in South Africa that suffered in the hand of the apartheid government, including the National Youth Organisation (NAYO) along with its Transvaal (now Gauteng) branch, the Transvaal Youth Organisation (TRYO). The participant noted that there was a high degree of suppression of the members of these organisations by the government. Furthermore, intimidation was employed to maintain apartheid's dominant position.

Therefore, when SASM was formed, their school principal brought in a member of TRYO who had recently been released from state detention to expose the students to the potential consequences they would face should they persist in their political pursuits. Nonetheless, that testimony did not deter them because they were already engrossed in the teachings of Black Consciousness and therefore of their identity. Participant 4 stated:

> *[He] called her to our class once she was released and said she must explain to us what the Boers did to her. Summary, at a certain point during interrogation they took out her breast and electrocuted her nipples as a form of torture and many other gory stories that she related to us. So, by bringing her to class he was basically saying to us you are exposing yourself to the brutality of the system but that's how they were trying to keep themselves in control. So, the introduction of being proud of who you are, being proud for being Black, being independent and so on, helped us to overcome that fear that White people were enforcing on us. So, what drove us was this absence of fear.*

This testimony aligns with Participant 1's who testified earlier about the absence of fear when they decided to resist the apartheid soldiers and police. However, Participant 6 presented a comprehensive portrayal of the conflict between fear and courage, illustrating their encounters during their time as students. They reflected on their apprehension as they challenged the then-current system since previous activists were apprehended and imprisoned on Robben Island for their courage. However, their desire for a promising future outweighed the prospect of yielding to fear, as Participant 6 noted:

> *Now we were aware of Sharpeville and even aware that the Mandelas and Sisulus were now on Robben Island. And even our parents, who were members of ANC or the Pan-Africanist Congress would always caution us. [They would say] … you will be like Mandela; you will go to Robben Island. This made us feel like we were caught between the fear that was being instilled by close family members and also the excitement of the struggles inside [us]. When we [sang], the spirit goes high [sic].*

The students' commitment to change was bolstered by the social context and shared drive to see change, particularly in moments of doubt and fear. Their interactions consolidated their sense of identity and strengthened their understanding and capacity for reasoning in relation to their circumstances. Participant 9 recalled an example of such engagements during their free periods/break from learning. The participant noted that discussions about the political landscape and what was happening in the country took place during these free periods. The discussions would revolve around existing political parties namely the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) as well as the government's choice to ban them. Participant 9 added

that active participation in these conversations fostered a stronger connection to the collective thus reinforcing the feelings of connection and group identity. This finding corresponds with Klandermans' (2014) profiling of collective identity. Participant 9 narrated their experience:

> *These political discussions continue to develop as we move along. The more the political discussions, the more you get nearer to the group. The more you get influenced, because you now have knowledge. So, the more we know, the more we want to participate. You wouldn't want not to participate when you hear the political situation of the country, the repression, the detentions, the death in detention, the imprisonment in Robben Island, the imprisonment in any other prison and the conditions in the prison.*

The finding, as seen from Participant 9's feedback, suggests that the discussions were platforms for constructing identity as they facilitated the exchange of knowledge among students and served as information centres that students used to transfer knowledge to one another.

A recurring statement found in several of the accounts is the phrase "each one, teach one." Students adopted this concept, believing that when an individual acquired knowledge on a particular subject from a family or community member or from a book or publication that was not widely accessible, it was their responsibility to disseminate the information to the next person after engaging with the content. They took this action to expand the dissemination of information thereby empowering others with the same knowledge and distancing themselves from the Bantu education act and system.

Participant 5 cited the discrepancies in the social structure of the education system as another major contributor to their activism. They were wrestling with the different education systems in one country, one for each apartheid-assigned racial group. This system appeared unjust to them and reinforced the notion that Black people were inferior. They do so by asking:

> *…why are other people taught differently in other schools? Why [do we have] different education systems in the same country? The curriculum for the Coloured, for the Indians, for the Whites [is different] ... The Whites come first, then the Indians, then the Coloureds, [and lastly] the Black people.*

For Participant 13, the motivation to protest stemmed from the recognition that their rights as students were being violated as they had no say in selecting their preferred language of instruction. This realisation ultimately motivated the students to take decisive action. Furthermore, according to Participant 10, the students realised that

remaining silent about the government's new policy could be interpreted as acceptance of the policy and its associated consequences which could have a significant impact on their future. Participant 10 stated that:

> *Silence is mistaken as consent [sic]. Consent is confused as contentment. As usual the voices of the suffering are either unheard or disregarded. Their plight albeit visible, intransigent power turns a blind eye and deaf ear. You protest to bring attention… As Frederick Douglass stated, 'power concedes nothing without a demand.*

Participant 10's feedback reflects Postma's (2016) assertion that protest movements are meaningless unless they contribute to the establishment of freedom or bring about essential changes in human life conditions to achieve freedom. The students' decision to join student groups like SASO and participate in a protest against the Bantu education system demonstrated their resolve to contribute to essential change in the lives of fellow students and Black South Africans.

Many participants contended that the state failed to recognise the students' demands and frustrations regarding the use of Afrikaans in schools. This study highlights that the establishment of a solid identity precedes engagement in any social movement aimed at transformation. The finding reinforces Van Laer's (2011) assertion that individuals engage in protest movements based on collective identity and ideological beliefs. Participant 9 confirmed this statement by saying:

> *… this fight [was] part of the bigger fight. It's not just a fight against Afrikaans. That's why some political analysts say June 16 became a kind of a milestone because, never was South Africa able to operate the same way again until we reached 1994. Because the part of the problem was that there was national oppression that we had to fight against.*

Participant 9's assertion seems valid even in cases where individuals are already dissatisfied with their current social standing and harbour aspirations to improve their circumstances. However, the findings indicate that the pursuit of change becomes more challenging without the establishment of identity. The ability to acknowledge and affirm one's identity is defined by Merolla et al (2012) as a proximate social structure because it empowers individuals to actively pursue their desired objectives. In the specific context under study, this entailed advocating for the elimination of Afrikaans as a language of instruction and what it stood for, as the language of oppression and as the denial of education to Black children by the apartheid government. The students protested to safeguard their cultural heritage, identity and future.

5.3.3 History as a tool for colonising the minds of students —the battle of cognitive dissonance

After analysing the findings, the current study found that the themes associated with cognitive dissonance were evident in the participants' responses. The study discovered that when participants referred to history or the study thereof, they did so from a dual perspective. One was assimilating what their prescribed books wanted them to learn, which formed part of their founding principles and engagement with the world around them, while the other was from the perspective of their teachers and peers who themselves were influenced by Black Consciousness.

This study therefore contends that this duality is a form of cognitive dissonance as defined by Harmon-Jones and Mills (2019) because on the one hand, students were taught history in order to view the world from the lens of the oppressors which, was meant to shape their views. On the other hand, they were taught to use history to determine how they should perceive themselves.

The content of historical literature was mentioned in detail by many participants to give context and perspective to what students were being exposed to. Participant 10 summarised this content as follows:

> *We were taught about the arrival of European colonial settlers which was presented in glowing terms. It lionized land dispossessors as heroic and the dispossessed as brutal villains that were the White man's burden to civilise. I learnt that the tribal wars between Europeans were 'world wars'. Black warriors like Shaka, Sekhukhune, Hintsa, Moshoeshoe were painted as backward, war some, bloodthirsty, cruel and unfit to govern themselves. Africa was denigrated as the dark continent that Whites could save and lead to light.*

A number of participants concurred with this perspective, asserting that the origin of history textbooks began with White Afrikaner authors who aimed to downplay the role or significance of Africans in historical events thus reducing their existence to a fleeting and inconsequential state which was overshadowed by the prominence of white individuals. Participant 8 described their recollection of events as follows:

> W*e were taught history, but history was only confined to the textbook for the purposes of you passing the subject, but it never included the African part of it. Some people would say our history textbooks were designed in such a way that the Blacks would be running in and out of the history pages with spears and then they die. The rest is the whites all the time. We therefore did not learn much about ourselves, except that when this Black Consciousness thing came in.*

Others made reference to the authors of these textbooks and what they sought to achieve through the text. Participant 4 explained this below:

> *The history book at the time was written by some White person called Boyce. The way he presented the history there is the way White people wanted us to understand history [sic]. So, the teacher would say, I'm going to teach you differently.*

The statement above signifies the proactive engagement of teachers in reshaping the cognitive structure of their students, while simultaneously adhering to the approved curriculum to avoid potential repercussions from the governing authorities. The findings further indicate that teachers were deeply committed to influencing pupils' views of the world. They fostered the development of critical thinking skills in the students. The findings present this information in multiple formats, with Participant 3 providing the following outline:

> *And I also attributed [our consciousness] to history teachers who would say, when teaching history, you must look at history critically. You must criticize it. You must interrogate it. You must not give me what is written in the book. History teachers were responsible to push us, unaware that they were pushing us to a radical element. I can say history for me is the one that made me to be conscious of politics.*

Participant 7 mirrored the caution and contribution from teachers with great detail and affection:

> *My history teacher, for example, would say… Let me teach you what was going on when Jan van Riebeek came in 1652. And in your mind already as a child, you begin to separate these two worlds, the world of the oppressor and my world and my perspectives. The teachers were giving me ways of looking at myself and not letting those (quote unquote) "facts" influence how I looked at myself.*

In addition to the knowledge imparted in the classroom, the findings indicate that students actively sought out supplementary resources to satisfy their intellectual curiosity and further expand their cognitive awareness, which was awakened by their engagement with Black Consciousness. The internal conflict experienced by the students stemmed from the recognition that the teachings they had received from their textbooks differed from the new information they were currently encountering, resulting in a conflict between these two worlds of knowledge. Participant 2 explained it as follows:

> *Those books that were written by Van Jaarsveld, distorted history which said White people were the first to arrive in South Africa. There were no Blacks around here. So, we found some of these books that would now teach us proper history that we used to share and understand what was happening out there. We then realised that history books were a tool of apartheid because they, the Boers, were the ones writing them.*

Some participants openly acknowledged that they did not select history as a school subject but expressed a desire to further their understanding of the subject, particularly the lively debates and interactions between teachers and students that involved in-

depth discussions of historical narratives. The motivation rose from the passion instilled by Black Consciousness and the aspiration to engage in a more comprehensive pursuit of the subject matter thus resolving the internal conflict between what they were expected to know versus the fresh perspectives imparted by their teachers. These views were represented by Participant 9 and Participant 12 respectively:

> *So, when we have an opportunity, those who are not doing history, [went into history classes] to discuss, because we wanted to know that history. Because of our political inclination. So, I learned history in that sense. It was for my knowledge (*Participant *9).*

> *I did not do history. But I used to enjoy going next door to Orlando High School where history would be taught with a Black Consciousness slant. And [the teacher] talked about slavery and then related that history to the present situation. Then he would say, Black man [sic], you're on your own, you need to rise up and take over the country and change your own personal circumstances. So even teachers would take an ordinary lesson and politicise and therefore agitate us to go and join the South African Student Movement (*Participant *12).*

The findings reveal that history teachers challenged students to question the authors of history books and take it a step further to ask them why there were not enough Black authors telling African stories, asking students questions such as, “Who is telling our story, who is telling our history?” This line of thinking caused students to begin engaging deeper with the prescribed content that was presented to them.

This study asserts that in the process of being exposed to historical texts through a Black Consciousness lens, the students’ minds were challenged to question everything they had learned in the past. The new information brought about conflict, not just with history, but also with their family members who cautioned them against knowing too much or playing outside the prescribed lines of knowledge as noted by Participant 6:

> *But [the content of the book] also struck me and I was beaten [for it] because my father caught me. But with him, he was more afraid that I'd share [the knowledge] with other kids and that he might be arrested for the material. With me, I was just reading out of curiosity.*

This confusion, between hunger for knowledge and cognitive dissonance, is a recurrent feature in the findings. The students sought to resolve it in order to return to what Drew (2023) calls a state of cognitive equilibrium. The students constantly felt the threat of being caught by authorities, but they were also driven by a quest to

discover their true selves, moving away from the curated narrative that the education system had presented to them.

5.3.3.4 Destruction of apartheid social structures

The researcher found a frequent reference to the destruction of state-owned entities within township communities by the youth. It is a further revelation of the premise that the events of 1976 surpassed the mere elimination of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools because a significant number of participants expressed their disapproval of government structures such as beer halls and municipal buildings within their communities. This finding supports Majeke's (1994) assertion that the combination of SASM, SASO and Black Consciousness led the students to focus their protests on the education system and the political aspects of apartheid. Of specific reference to this study is the use of alcohol by the state as a weapon to numb and desensitise the minds of the working class during their commute to and from work. Participant 4 regarded this practice as an attack on the family structure because it resulted in fathers consistently returning home in a drunken state and thereafter subjecting the mothers to physical abuse. The destruction of such properties followed the initial uprising in Soweto and became a precedence in other regions.

Participant 8 who was a student in Mamelodi explained why they resorted to destroying property:

> *We would burn the office of the municipality, anything that was seen to be government was the first target. After they shot [at us], our first target were beer halls. We knew that they (the government) were destroying us through them. So we went and burned every beer hall in our community, which was a form of government's system to generate money out of Black people, whilst killing them with drunkenness. And our fathers would always go there and when they came back, they would come back drunk and beat our mothers.*

The students demonstrated a clear focus by identifying the weaknesses in their communities that posed challenges and threats to their collective identity. This awareness extended to the solid structures that the government used to strengthen their power in Black communities. Participant 12 acknowledged that the existence of beer halls was perceived as a hindrance to parental involvement in the movement they were promoting as well as in their lives.

> *The beer halls were built from the taxes of our parents, but our parents, instead of focusing on our people, were drunk. We wanted them sober. We wanted them to take interest in our lives.*

These government owned structures, as explained by Participant 2, were built next to train stations and would open as early as 6:30 in the morning to catch commuters on their way to work. The students saw them as a form of control by the state, to keep the minds of community elders docile and thus easy to control. This study implies that if one is not thinking about what matters, then one will not act to effect change. Therefore, the sobriety and availability of community elders became a source of motivation for the students. Along with the eradication of beer halls came the destruction of municipal buildings because they were seen by students as the hub of information pertaining to the affairs of their communities. The findings suggest that these structures preserved property ownership including rental documents, birth records and other documents that the state used to threaten community members.

The students also resorted to destroying academic literature that they perceived to be detrimental to their intellectual development. Participants 8 and 12 were quick to clarify that the destruction of those government entities did not include institutions of learning or libraries because they recognised their function as repositories of knowledge. However, Participant 6 provided details regarding the specific literature that was the focus of the students' attention. These were books issued by the government with the intention of manipulating their education. Participant 6 therefore stated that:

> *…students were resisting. They had already burned books, but you know they did not burn their own books. I think it's Fouche… who sent Afrikaans books to schools and said they'll study in Afrikaans whether they like it or not. Those were the books that were burned by those young people.*

The participant spoke of “those young people” because they were marching in solidarity with the learners from secondary schools. They wanted to learn and grow in knowledge, but they did not want it presented to them in the “oppressor's language”.

5.5 Chapter conclusion

The findings show that exposure to student bodies like SRC and SASM were sources of conscientisation to students in 1976. This is in addition to extracurricular activities like debate clubs which enabled students to discuss the ideas of the Black Consciousness philosophy with their peers. The findings also reveal that establishing a solid identity was crucial for students to engage in the social movement of 1976 and beyond through sources like Black-conscious university students who were appointed as teachers at high schools. The sources and identity assimilation of Black

Consciousness exerted a gravitational pull on the Black student population who were seeking a sense of identity outside what apartheid texts dictated to them.

Although mainstream media channels like radio and newspapers were available, they did not serve as the primary sources of conscientisation among the youth because they were seen as propaganda sources. The findings suggest that the group of 1976 used new media channels such as music, debating clubs, SRCs and underground sources such as Radio Freedom and SASO Newsletters to get information. Without these alternative media channels, the students would have struggled to form or spread the message of Black Consciousness to others, and they would have failed to cause change in the socio-political structures of their day. The findings reveal that the message of Black Consciousness spread through alternative media.

Regarding social structures, the findings reveal that the comprehensive nature of apartheid structures and policies exposed students to the inequalities of the regime in respect of both educational structures and the living environments. Social structures established the basis for the reasoning behind the protest actions in which the youth actively challenged the macro social structure of South Africa's apartheid government.

The findings further demonstrate the perception of history textbooks as a tool of apartheid and reveal that participants viewed the study of history from a dual perspective.

Finally, the findings reveal how the apartheid structure used elements like alcohol as a weapon to numb and desensitise the minds of the working class during their commute to and from work. Students viewed this as an attack on the family structure because it resulted in fathers consistently returning home in a drunken state and thereafter subjecting the mothers to abuse. Chapter 6 presents the findings from the 2015-2016 Rhodes and Fees Must Fall data as well as an analysis of the X feeds of the movement during the same time frame.

CHAPTER SIX:

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS: 2015-2016 FALLIST MOVEMENT

6.1 Introduction

As in the previous chapter, this chapter examines the findings of the current study, in accordance with the research questions and objectives that were formulated in the first stages of this study. The chapter focuses on the data obtained from interviews conducted with the participants of the Fees Must Fall and Rhodes Must Fall protests of 2015-2016. These are individuals that actively participated in, initiated or led protest movements in their respective educational institutions. The findings are presented in themes which align with the research questions. The chapter also includes an examination of media content from X to assess its role in conveying information and/or shaping student consciousness and views. Some discussions narrow their focus exclusively to 2015 (and not 2015-2016) as that is the year when the tweets were posted.

The study presents the findings based on themes that align with the following research questions:

1. What led to the consciousness of the activists of the 1976 and 2015-2016 movements?
2. Did the media play a role in conscientising and developing the identity of the movement participants?
3. If so, in what way did the various media play the role of identity formation and consciousness?

6.2 Brief profile of students from the 2015-2016 Rhodes and Fees Must Fall Movement

Similar to the group of 1976, the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall group of 2015-2016 identified with the idea of bringing down a system of learning namely the colonised system of education as well as the increase in tuition fees which excluded

learners from previously disadvantaged communities from entering tertiary institutions of learning.

Recap of the Fallism Movement (as reported in Chapter 3)

To recap the review of the two Fallism movements under study, this study recalls that the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movement began when a Black South African student threw a bucket of excrement over a statue of Cecil Rhodes (who was a key figure in South Africa's segregation process) at the university of Cape Town in March 2015 (Fairbanks, 2015). This move sparked a protest that sought to end the prevalence of apartheid and colonial era statues at South African Universities because it spread from UCT to other universities that were previously reserved for white students. The current study contends that the Fallism concept emerged as a response to the falling (collapse) of certain structures that aggrieved students. This discussion is covered in Chapter 3 of this study.

The movement benefited from technological advancements that helped propel its message faster and wider than that of its 1976 counterpart. Based on this description, the researcher contends that the Fallist movement was propelled by the hashtag (#) such as #RhodesMustFall and/or #FeesMustFall which acted as a visual symbol to start conversations about the movement and create international exposure for it (Hodes, 2017).

This study included participants from various universities and similar to the previous chapter, it presents the findings by using regular font for quotes from written sources (e.g., SASO Newsletters) and italics for participant feedback from interviews. Some direct quotes have been amended for grammatical purposes.

6.3 Themes from the Findings – 2015–2016

6.3.1 Theme One: ***The underlying motivation for participation in student movements***

The findings show that most of the participants felt excluded from their tertiary institutions because they felt that their institutions' historical positions overshadowed them. Participant 2 described this phenomenon as feeling like "living in a stifled

environment". The findings also suggest that the students experienced a sense of marginalisation rather than inclusion in their institutions. This finding aligns with Nyamnjoh's (2017) claim that Black students experienced a sense of alienation from their tertiary institutions. Participant 4 explained their role in the #RhodesMustFall protest thus:

> *There was a lot of culture and a lot of tradition that was based on certain races which were not accommodative of mine. Mine was a predominantly white Afrikaner institution prior to 1994. I also felt like the presence of [apartheid icon] statues and the institution itself, were promoting racism because the statues were for a particular race and era of the country.*

The findings indicate that most of the participants reported receiving their primary education either at *Model C* schools which were initially intended for white students or at private schools that were racially integrated. Upon their arrival at universities that were previously exclusive to white students, they experienced a shift in their self-perception, leading them to reassess their racial and social identities as they began to perceive themselves through an unfamiliar and racially motivated lens. This is explained by Participant 1:

> *There was a great amount of victimisation of students who wanted to raise their voices against a certain level of injustice that happened in the institution. Prejudices that are maybe based on the colour of your skin…*

The culture shift is attributed by other participants to the change in the environment, specifically from living in rural or township areas to relocating to major cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg in order to pursue higher education at institutions like the University of Cape Town and the University of Johannesburg or the Witwatersrand (WITS) University, respectively. Participant 3 became aware of the socio-economic disparity based on race after relocating to Cape Town where racial lines became more distinct and definitive. The participant stated:

> *I grew up in a village which was a homogeneous society. So, for me, inequality didn't really have an ethnic identity since where I grew up, if my neighbour was well off, they were Black, if they were poor, they were Black. So, coming to Cape Town changed my perspective on things. Seeing the inequality, the racial lens around who has and who doesn't, really awakened an awareness*.

This finding indicates that the recognition of these inequalities initially occurred in a solitary manner, as participants felt a sense of internalised embarrassment when challenging their social statuses within their respective social and educational institutions. The embarrassment alludes to a sense of double consciousness,

described by Meer (2019) and Smith (2021). Participant 8 first became aware of this embarrassment and inequality during their formative years, as they tried to process the concepts of social lines based on the economic standing of various racial groups:

> *So, it's part of a developmental process as you come of age, and you start to see what is just and what is unjust. So, yeah, there's no particular point in time, but I would say from just a young age, seeing the disparities of our country, where we grew, vis-a-vis where other people grew up, the type of living conditions that we grow up in, the other types of conditions that are meant for a certain few.*

The students only discovered a sense of community when they encountered other students who were also pondering the same questions. These group interactions (with other students) are a recurring topic in the findings and in all instances, led to the creation of meetings which served as safe spaces for Black students to share openly, their observations about their respective institutions and express their frustrations. The finding corroborates Ahmed's (2019) discussion of black pain as a unifying agent for Black students, as articulated also by Participant 5:

> *We used to have plenary sessions where a lot of people got conscientised and you got introduced to a lot of concepts that you perhaps [were] not introduced to in high school. Concepts like decolonisation, intersectionality and understanding that university in and of itself isn't a space that allows people like myself to thrive, it isn't a concept that is compatible with what was termed, the Black body.*

The data further reveals a trend in the increase of membership in student body organisations because of these meetings, such as the South African Student Congress (SASC), the Young Communist League (YCL) and political parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) student wing. These organisations started building language around what the students were collectively experiencing. Klandermans (2014) recognises this as collective identity, which means members of a group or category share an identity. Participant 6 recounted their experience:

> *You reach a point where you're curious about what it means to be Black. Finding the right words, knowing how to use them and expressing a thought or idea that is already bubbling up can be challenging. So, the organisations helped us build the right language.*

Similarly, Participant 7 presented a perspective on how students identified their level of consciousness. According to Participant 7, their grievance was based on the "fight against exclusion" in both the financial and educational systems of the institutions they attended. The concept of "the missing middle" within the context of the Fees Must Fall movement also emerged in the data. Participants observed that the National Student

Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) did not provide feasible financial assistance. This is because the NSFAS model only supported the most economically disadvantaged students, neglecting those whose parents belonged to the middle class. Participant 7 explained further:

> *I was part of the missing middle students whereby NSFAS [could not] fund me. And being part of that group of students, I was experiencing my parents go through pains to fund my higher learning education.*

In line with the Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement, some students alluded to the notion of free education which was pledged by the ruling political party, the African National Congress (ANC), during the 1950s when it formulated the Freedom Charter. The charter guaranteed free education for every person in South Africa. Participant 10 drew a parallel between the period when the Charter was written and the FMF moment when they, as students, recognised that the commitment had not yet been fulfilled. The participant (10) stated:

> *So, our struggle was a sad one because it was against those who had made the promise [of free education]. We found [that money was being] used as a barrier to exclude us from accessing this education. Therefore, the doors of learning for us were not open. Education was not free. We were excluded* [The high fee entry requirement for registration at universities made it difficult for students without access to a secure income to register and obtain a qualification].

The aforementioned statement clearly indicates that students, all born between the late 1980s and early 1990s, began to collectively articulate perceived injustice and inequality as they advanced in their higher education, sharing their experiences with others who had similar experiences. This corroborates Mudavanhu's (2017) assertion that the unifying power of suffering served as a catalyst for change.

The findings show that exposure to historically white universities conscientised students of 2015–2016 (participants of this study) to their Blackness. They were compelled to engage with the meaning of that identity on a scale of relevance in society and belonging in a world that seemingly was not built for their race. They therefore, experienced exclusion based on their race and their financial status.

6.3.2 Theme Two: ***Role of media in raising awareness and shaping the identity of students***

6.3.2.1 Feedback from interview responses

As previously stated in 5.3.2, the media shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action—it is what people see when they read and/or engage with a message (McLuhan, 2003). In this case, this study sees oral history, culture, literature, poetry and student engagement platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter) as media.

Oral history, books and films as media

The findings indicate that the participants' schoolteachers played a significant role in introducing them to Black Consciousness through history classes or conversations about history. It should be noted that the school system did not actively seek out participants to teach them about the philosophy of Black Consciousness. However, the purpose, it seems, was to provide Black pupils with lessons about Black history by their respective teachers. Some participants even attributed their understanding of the concept of Blackness to their white schoolteachers who aimed to broaden their perspective by presenting an alternative worldview. The positioning of oral history as media exemplifies the dynamic nature of the concept of media and how it influences people's perception when they interact with a message.

The study found that books and biographical films developed racial awareness or more specifically, Black Consciousness among the participants. The participants expressed an increasing inclination towards the ideas conveyed in books such as Steve Biko's *I Write What I Like* and through contact with Frantz Fanon's literature which articulate with clarity the participants' convictions and thoughts about society. Participant 3 explained this link between thought and vocabulary thus:

> *So, for me, Biko was important because I was a psychology student. [He would] have been one of my primary interests in terms of how one locates the impact of what had happened to Black people, what that has meant psychologically, how they were impacted by that [as well as] what it means for their psychological well-being. And Biko really articulated that for the South African context. Even Fanon, Fanon's writings as well, really do that.*

Participant 3 expressed a perspective on this literature that appears to be deeply internalised and focused on their personal connection to the Black experience. They gained enlightenment regarding their questions about the Black race to which they belong. The impact of literature as media is confirmed by Participant 5 who stumbled on Biko's book accidentally when a visitor forgot a copy of the book at their home. The

engagement with the book's content subsequently transformed the participant's perspective on life, as noted below:

> *My training started young. So, someone left, I don't remember who, but someone left a copy of Steve Biko's I Write What I Like at home, and I read it. Black Consciousness shaped how I interacted with almost every sphere of my life, my friends, how we talk, what we talk about...*

Other participants such as Participant 7 and 8 reported being awakened to the concepts of Black Consciousness as an identity builder through their exposure to the films "Cry Freedom" and "Malcolm X", both starring the American actor Denzel Washington. Observing the representation of their racial identity in language and grappling with the task of articulating the experiences and significance of being a person of African descent in the global context contributed to their sense of identity and social make-up.

The arts and visual texts as media

The arts emerged as additional media for developing a sense of awareness of their individuality in the collected data. This theme builds on the previous one which explored the sources of conscientisation among students. The theme examines how these sources, profiled as media, conscientiously educated the students. Participants mentioned that the establishment of art platforms such as poetry sessions and art exhibitions provided them with opportunities to explore and develop their identities in a secure environment. The platforms allowed them to conceptualise their identities and shape the beliefs that today characterise their self-identity. This notion can be seen in Participant 1's feedback below:

> *I did a lot of poetry and jazz when I was at varsity, being a jazz and a poetry lover. I met a bunch of friends that told me about some poetry evenings on a Friday and our poetry evenings became our way of letting out what it is we were going through in a creative way. They felt safe for us because then it was with people that identified with the same struggles and we were narrating them in a way that we could understand. We felt like our own words were being echoed.*

Participant 2 also regarded the arts as media that communicated their ideas and thoughts to the public:

> *… students from the Humanities Faculty in the acting programme, would come up with ways to demonstrate a lot of what we were trying to relay to the public.*

It also emerged that the collective ideas gathered by the students led them to create gatherings that served as meeting areas to explore more concepts about their shared

experiences. This finding supports Morreira's (2017) claim that the students of 2015–2016 encountered and embraced the Black Consciousness philosophy through literature and social engagements with other students which subsequently influenced their sense of identity and cognitive processes. Their meetings took place as either committees or *"imbizos"* (community hall gatherings) and were filled with like-minded individuals who explored the notion of Blackness together. Participant 9 presented this media, as far as it affected their university, as a place that unified all bodies—political and independent:

> *We had a committee at university, representative of all other structures—EFF, PASMA, SASCO... We were united in this forum. So even if we had a meeting in Gauteng, all of us would travel to Gauteng and meet other universities in Gauteng and strategise. And we also had communication with Comrades in Rhodes, in UCT and we communicated.*

Participant 3 provided more insight on the *imbizos* and how these meetings were a "warm" gathering that used elements of nostalgia and apparel to communicate the ideals of Blackness:

> *So, these meetings took place on campus for Black people. And whenever those meetings took place, there would be a fireplace so we could all gather around the fire. The food that would be served at that event would be African. There would be a speaker who would address us about an important issue affecting the Black community. And of course, dashikis became very fashionable. Suddenly you began to see a lot of people on campus wearing dashikis. I think that's about the same time that I threw away my suit.*

Participants were resolute in their depiction of various media as sources of developing their consciousness and identity within their universities as Black students in institutions that were formerly established for white students. The use of media such as the arts articulated their campus experience and helped them understand their emotional responses to issues like isolation and rejection from their institutions. This can be seen in Participant 3's feedback about the visual text (media) they were exposed to at the time leading up to the 2015–2016 student protest:

> *Our SASCO (South African Students Congress) t-shirts in 2013-2014 had a picture of Biko on them. Black Consciousness was part of the popular lingo, if you will. Biko's image gave us a sense that this was someone who was actually articulating a very concrete situation and it made it a real situation, it made it quite reachable.*

Added to visual text on clothing, participants mentioned music as a solidifier of identity formation with some participants mentioning "*i-Gwijo*", a type of song/melody rooted in isiXhosa tradition, sung by a group in a conversational and responsorial manner

(Sehume, 2023). *I-gwijo* infused the students with the courage to continue their journey of self-discovery and justice. This finding supports Fairbanks' (2015) assertion that identity is a human condition of integrating the present with the past, because the students blended the traditional practice of singing *i-Gwijo* with their current position and the development of identity. The words and sounds emanating from a unified voice gave the students courage to explore questions about their identity as Black students. This is described by Participant 6 below:

> *[Music] just provided some good background in some ways and you know, music, especially like going back to being proud of who we are, music and i-Gwijo, made you fear-less, your fear, [but when you hear the music], you become confident.*

In addition to traditional music such as singing in the previous example, the prevalence of social media usage is noteworthy in the findings. Some participants spoke about the emergence of WhatsApp groups as a media platform that brought students together from various universities across the country. This finding indicates that WhatsApp groups which emerged on campuses like UJ and UFS were fluid and not permanent because they faced the threat of “secret agents” joining them to sabotage their plans and intentions of meeting and sharing ideas, as noted by Participant 8:

> *Mostly a lot of information was disseminated via social media and WhatsApp groups. We joined a lot of WhatsApp groups, where people were canvassing various strategies and ideas on how to execute the struggle. The nature of it was so spontaneous. You'd have one WhatsApp group today and then it closes down and then another one. Just a confluence of different WhatsApp groups.*

The WhatsApp groups which the students used as a platform to openly discuss their protest plans solidified a sense of group identity. The students actively engaged in the protests used them to communicate the planned protest locations and logistics. The WhatsApp groups were augmented by other social media platforms which added to the spread of news and concepts for what they termed “the struggle”. This suggests that participants viewed their fight to eradicate the negative connotations associated with their Black identity as a struggle. The use of social media is defined as "gasoline that spread information" by Participant 5 because it allowed them to share their experiences with other students across the country and thus influenced the narrative about change and its necessity during the RMF and FMF. It helped to conscientise other students about the need for reformation in South Africa’s education system. As Participant 5 noted:

> *…a big part, and I think something people underestimate about these student movements, is that social media was a big central part of the student movements. We had something that maybe 1976 did not have, which was this vast network of communication lines that got information from one place to another instantaneously. For me, Black Consciousness or the journey [towards it], was about the five stages of grief. It [reflects] your othering. It impacts individuals who have experienced loss, whether it's their identity, their land or their ability to produce. These are people who have had something stolen from them—something fundamental. Once I understood that, I moved through the five stages of grief. As a result, what appeared on my [X] feed was a significant amount of anger towards my university.*

The participant was narrating their journey of identity development and described it as a realisation of something painful which they associated with the image and identity of being Black. Furthermore, they described how they shared their anger on X with their followers. Black Consciousness revealed their identity to them and the participant tried to reveal that identity to their followers thus contributing that lens to the followers. The participant's experience reflects what Borah (2011) describes as a subconscious decision-making process characterised by the available heuristic of Blackness and all it stands for which developed and shaped the participant's identity.

Student bodies and organisations as media

Finally, the combination of various student organisations and information groups resulted in the dissemination of this movement through mainstream media. The findings indicate that mainstream media indirectly influenced the spread of the movement which supports the view by Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes (2014) that mainstream media has an indirect influence on fostering attitudes and resources such as trust and emotions that encourage participation in protest movements. Some participants acknowledged that the news coverage piqued their desire to learn more about the movement. Journalists, driven by curiosity, visited university campuses to report on the student protests and the prevailing sentiment shared in their respective gatherings. This finding addresses the role of mainstream media and framing which for Estupinan (2017) is the act of highlighting specific aspects of a perceived reality to emphasise them in a communication or media setting. Such traditional modes of reporting reached audiences who were not otherwise accessible through social media. Participant 4 elaborated on this point:

> *I think number one, for the different campaigns to gain momentum, media played a very, very vital role because it was through [broadcast and print] media that we learned about what was happening at UCT. It was through media that we learned about what*

was happening at WITS and over time the whole thing spread to the different institutions.

Participant 4's statement is corroborated by Participant 7 who credited television and static news media billboards with their knowledge of this emerging culture, beyond the boundaries of their university:

> *It was the television. And then again, another big influence was the, you know the billboards that the Daily Sun puts on poles or your Pretoria News or the Sowetan, it would be there, for example, that WITS student does this… etc. and the radio.*

The findings indicate that the development of students' identity was not a singular occurrence but a gradual process involving multiple media such as visual texts, oral history, social media and interpersonal interactions with other students. These factors collectively contributed to the establishment of a strong sense of identity and acceptance of their Blackness within predominantly white academic settings.

6.3.2.2 Content analysis of X posts and their role in conscientising students

These findings were selected to support and enrich the primary source of information from student interviews of the Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movement in 2015–2016. The findings are from X (previously known as twitter) feeds with the hashtags #RhodesMustFall, #RhodesWillFall and #RhodesHasFallen as well as the hashtags #FeesMustFall posted between March 2015 and October 2016. The tweets are presented under the above hashtags to protect the identity of their authors. The researcher found emotive descriptions or identify formers such as the use of inclusive pronouns such as "we" and "our."

The Rhodes Must Fall tweet samples, commencing in March 2015, focused primarily on the development of the statue's removal from UCT, rather than on informing or encouraging students to join the movement. The researcher asserts therefore that engagement on X (formerly known as Twitter) came after the initial discussions alluded to by students in the previous section. The tweets do however display robust engagement from X users, starting from the announcement of the removal date of the Rhodes statue from UCT's premises which occurred on 9 April 2015 (Trippe, 2019).

The researcher found an undeniable use of inclusive pronouns throughout the available sample size of X's #RhodesMustFall, #RhodesWillFall, #RhodesHasFallen and #FeesMustFall tweets. The use of these pronouns indicates an effort to convey a

sense of unity and the creation of a collective identity to the intended audience. Starting with the Rhodes Must Fall tweets, the sample consistently refers to "students" in the text, symbolising a collective movement of individuals. In other words, the tweets celebrated the unified front of UCT students rather than supporting a single individual at the University of Cape Town. This is exemplified in the tweets below:

> I suppose the young, courageous students at UCT [University of Cape Town] have ensured that #RhodesWillFall (#RhodesWillFall, 24 March 2015).
>
> Well done UCT students! ... UCT deans approve statue's removal – Western Cape… (#RhodesWillFall, 25 March 2015).

This sentiment is evident even among media professionals who reported the official date and time of the statue's removal. The viewpoint of journalists attracted attention to the movement and supported the legitimacy of its purpose. This statement comes from the critical replies that the tweet received which in turn initiated a discussion on X regarding the significance of removing the statue. The tweet reads:

> BREAKING: #RhodesWillFall by 5pm tomorrow! (#RhodesWillFall, 8 April 2015).

But one of the responses to this tweet says:

> …It is sad that the removal of a statue gets priority over education, quite pathetic! Situations like these make us look like a circus (#RhodesWillFall, 9 April 2015).

While there are only a few tweets addressing the creation of the Rhodes Must Fall movement, the media coverage it received indicates that it was a relevant topic that garnered attention particularly from media like *Bloomberg*. Through the deliberate choice of the word "topple", their tweet applauds the solidarity of the students and the movement, suggesting that the removal of the statue is a significant historical milestone that the media eagerly sought to be associated with:

> South African students topple a relic of apartheid (#RhodesHasFallen, 10 April 2015).

The text depicts a collaborative effort by students at the University of Cape Town in 2015 to remove the Rhodes statue, an achievement that would not have been possible if the students had not taken the time to build and solidify their Black Consciousness identity through media like the arts, literature and music. In Fairbank's (2015) analysis of this event, the students understood the statue as a symbol of the University of Cape Town's celebration of white culture which included elements such as a colonial curriculum and lack of mental health support for Black students. Therefore, “toppling” was symbolic of the removal of its representation and of Black pain (Ahmed, 2019)

from the institution. Therefore, the move was a historical event. While the movement later expanded to encompass other themes under the Fallism umbrella, these open X discussions were the defining characteristics of not only the movement but also the collective identity of South African students who identified themselves as *Fallists.* The discussions further solidified the concept of solidarity among students and young people in pursuit of a socially inclusive agenda. The above discussions on RMF would later contribute to the Fees Must Fall movement, as students eagerly encouraged one another on X to remain steadfast in their commitment to the cause, as exemplified by the following user:

> The revolution will be no re-run brothers; the revolution will be live (*#FeesMustFall #2015 #1976*, 21 October 2015).

The user delicately draws a connection between #FeesMustFall movement and the student movement of 1976, indicating the awareness of the significant impact that the group of 1976 had in challenging the apartheid state. Molteno (1979) describes the actions of the youth of 1976 as those of students challenging a system of exploitation and oppression of Black South Africans. The above tweet however does not provide further elaboration on the link between 1976 and 2015. This is due to the shift in emphasis towards the cause and solidarity among students instead of on perceived obstacles that might have discouraged others from joining the #FeesMustFall movement. The author may have kept the tweet short in order to maintain the #FeesMustFall message and avoid any additional elements that could divert attention from the united nationwide demonstration. The theme of unity is supported by the following tweet:

> What I have learnt from #FeesMustFall 2015 is that unity is important. #aluta_continua (#FeesMustFall, 12 January 2016).

While this particular tweet was published a few months after the physical protest, it demonstrates how the #FeesMustFall movement maintained its impact on youth identity, as it showcased a shared and unified identity.

The study also found a trend of texts pointing to the future of the Fallism movement, signalling a greater purpose and cause for it beyond the fall of the Rhodes statue. This study considers these texts educational because the tone and words used were emotive and persuasive, providing options for what the movement could achieve

beyond the removal of the statue. The author crafted their content to effectively communicate their convictions to their intended audience as follows:

> … history is a classroom. Why must we tolerate coddling of apartheid and colonial leaders in South Africa? (#RhodesWillFall, 6 April 2015).

The text implies that readers ought to think of history as a teaching tool so that they can identify the injustices of the past. The finding reflects Linden's (2017) assertion about the students of 2015-2016 who rather than ignore history confronted it and attracted other universities across the country to join them by using social media and the hashtag. The tweet also challenges the reader to perceive colonial statues such as Rhodes' as symbols of the state's sacred-held beliefs and to discern that the statue fails to reflect the perspectives of Black students. It does so by using the words "coddling of apartheid and colonial leaders". These words, in the context of South Africa's young history, can induce emotive responses from the readers and incite them to action, either through in-depth research about the meaning of apartheid and the statue or through active engagement with the author of the tweet, which was the case in this particular situation. The tweet is part of a series of messages initiated by the author:

> I have long awaited this moment where the decision of our leaders to allow these buggers off scot-free is challenged (#RhodesWillFall, 30 March 2015).

The text implies that the existence or conservation of colonial-era statues in South Africa constituted a violation of some human rights, as the author contends that they were evading accountability ("scot–free") for their role in shaping the country's history. The tweet also positions and exemplifies the large-social structure of race (Merolla et al, 2012) as a marker of identity by calling for collective action. Fairbanks (2015) defines this form identity development as a human condition of integrating the present with the past. The tweet therefore successfully connects the concepts of social structures and identity, while also bringing to light the pain of South Africa's divided history.

The call for the removal of Rhodes and other colonial statues from university campuses served as an invitation for the country's leaders to reconsider their decision to keep them. This was the students' way of continuing and taking ownership of the country's previous struggles. The above tweet sparked an active dialogue between

the author and various other users who either agreed with or challenged the views based on their convictions, as demonstrated by this user's response:

> Transformation is the key, not statues (#RhodesWillFall, 6 April 2015).

The text validates the participants' notion that engaging in dialogue or open conversations had an impact on the thoughts and perspectives of students and, in this case, of other X users who may have initially been undecided about the Rhodes statue debate. These individuals may have only formed their opinions after engaging with the viewpoints presented by other users in this particular thread. Mudavhanu (2017) and Frassinelli (2018) describe the alternative media X as the catalyst for protest movements, emphasising its role in enhancing students' awareness and forming their identities. This view is corroborated by the input of a user who contributed to the discussion by expressing their unwillingness to be constantly reminded of the country's distressing past, symbolised by statues that represent a different time and outlook in South Africa's history. The user states:

> We are tired of seeing reminders of our pain and suffering. This goes to show we are clueless [about] our pain (#RhodesWillFall, 6 April 2015).

The tweet's allusion to "our pain" underscores the shared and collective identity of Blackness and highlights Fairbanks' (2015) analysis of the emergence of the 2015 student movement as a movement that stemmed from Black students' recognition of their entanglement in a lengthy history of Black suffering and pain, thereby moulding their sense of self. The tweet concludes by warning the readers against the potential ignorance about South Africa’s history and urges them to consider the significance of the statue. The warning underpins and heightens Giliomee's (2019) claim that strategic focus and intentionality played a role in the construction and development of apartheid, which aimed to instil a sense of ethical preservation in Afrikaners while simultaneously enforcing racial discrimination to achieve this preservation. The statue represented that past.

Although X users expressed happiness and viewed the removal of the statue from the University of Cape Town as a victory, they were more inclined to highlight the central cause for the statue's removal throughout the course of this discussion, especially in the period leading to the date of its removal. This aspect of the tweets demonstrated

a consistent dedication and resolve towards the pursuit of a decolonised education and greater inclusivity in the discourse about Fallism and colonial ideology within higher education institutions. The tweet in question reads:

> It's official, UCT #RhodesWillFall… but I hope the students remember that the statue was NOT the end, but the start. We want it all!!! [sic] (#RhodesWillFall, 8 April 2015).

The tweet conveys the goal of UCT students to address and resolve long-standing concerns such as alienation from the university, creating a sense of belonging in the education system and inclusive decolonised educational content within the university's (UCT) establishments. According to Maseremule (2015), the students sought to restore and assert Black pride in their fellow students by offering them the capacity to think and live by a consistent system of sound principles. The above tweet served as a reminder that the movement aimed to address and rectify previous disparities while advocating for a comprehensive approach to redefining the country through education. Another user echoes this sentiment, maintaining that the statue was not the primary focus of the movement. Rather, it was a tool to open discussion about its meaning:

> Now that the statue is being taken down, can we talk about how this whole movement had little to do with the statue itself? (#RhodesWillFall, 9 April 2015).

The above tweet also emphasises the issue of identity, further contributing to the deliberate shaping of the participants' identity formation and its importance. The text implies that the movement's main concern was not the physical structure of the statue, but rather the importance of the students' sense of identity. It further challenges them to use this identity to address other relevant issues affecting their communities. The tweet emphasises the claim by Von Zabern and Tulloch (2020) that media producers have the power to shape how their audience perceives the world by framing their audience's thought processes and opinions. By framing their words in this manner, the author succeeds in provoking a sense of moving towards a greater purpose in the minds of their readers. Additionally, this tweet facilitated further discussions about the implications of the statue's removal. Several tweets reiterated the significance of unity and its potential to bring about positive change, provided students remained determined about expressing their concerns on societal problems:

> This means you can turn the country around young people. Now you know what power you have. The economy is next (*#RhodesHasFallen*, 9 April 2015).

Participants used X to amplify the momentum of transformation. In literature, this approach is discussed by Mokonehatse (2018), Hodes (2016), Bosch (2016), Mudavanhu (2017) and Frassinelli (2018) who posit that alternative media like X was the preferred driver of protest movements in the 2010s. The writers of these tweets played a crucial role in disseminating the information that was essential for sustaining the movement. Hoffman and Pompper (2020) differentiate this from alternative media's counterparts, mainstream media which is limited to prioritising its reporting based on news values in order to generate income for their institutions.

This study posits that the debates on X in which young people actively participated contributed to their conscientisation and understanding of historical and societal practices. This assertion is based on X's ability to encourage young people and students to exercise their rights as well as its ability to educate them on the historical setting of the country. The assertion supports Hodes' (2016) observation that the Fallism movement saw a rise in participation as a result of the quick dissemination of content on social media which helped to strengthen the group's collective identity. In addition, the tweets actively established a theme of Fallism by proposing the decline or fall of other systems such as racism, corruption and inequality, as indicated by the tweet below, which is followed by another that interestingly proposes the rise of free education:

> I am happy that #RhodesHasFallen… Now can we also start some #InequalityMustFall, #PovertyMustFall, #RacismMustFall or #CorruptionMustFall? (#RhodesHasFallen, 9 April 2015).

> *But I find this odd! If you can have such a successful protest, what's stopping you from fighting for free education? Well?* (#RhodesHasFallen, 9 April 2015).

The question, "What's stopping you?", not only challenges the reader to reflect on their views and identity-fuelled convictions but it also serves as a call to build on the movement by protesting against other social issues such as the high fee structures and decolonising tertiary institutions. It maintains that the ability to initiate change rests with the participants rather than the government system. The tweet reflects a recurring theme which delved into the importance of history as a narrative tool for awakening people to previous harmful actions that can be avoided by anticipating more informed future events that improve the decisions of the past. This idea is cemented by the following user who in 2016, following the removal of the Rhodes statue at UCT the

previous year, directed the audience to an article profiling the "importance of decolonised education":

> An in depth read on #RhodesMustFall and the importance of #DecolonisedEducation for a modern world era (#RhodesMustFall, 15 April 2016*).*

This portion is significant because the article in question points to the journey of #RMF from South Africa to the birth country of Rhodes in the United Kingdom (UK). Students of Oriel College at Oxford University in the UK also considered the removal of his statue (along with other systemic racial issues in the curriculum), thus, continuing the #RMF movement at Oxford in late 2015 (Day, 2023). In the text, the author gives a detailed overview of decolonisation as a postcolonial theory and irony, as it was developed in western institutions that were "*embedded in privileged networks":*

> The project of decolonisation in the humanities was taken up vigorously in the 1990s by postcolonial theory. Its principal text was Edward Said's polemic, Orientalism, whose central insight – that the west exercised power over the east in the time of colonisation by studying it to take ownership of it, and then misrepresenting it – is still pertinent and illuminating today. But there is a critique of postcolonial theory that cannot be wholly discounted: that it held sway in elite western institutions and was itself embedded in privileged networks. It makes Rhodes Must Fall's message about decolonisation… particularly difficult and urgent (Chaudhuri, 2016).

That the movement became a prominent part of an imperial institution demonstrates the enduring influence of UCT students and their South African counterparts who championed the cause of decolonising the education system. The movement also expanded to advocate for a fee-free education system, impacting all higher learning institutions in the country.

Similarly, the momentum of the Fees Must Fall movement was supported by the use of X, albeit to different extents, as the study encountered a limited number of tweets leading to the October 2015 protest. However, the study discovered an exclusive X page that was specifically developed for the #FeesMustFall movement. The page, with a total of 629 (09 July 2024) followers, declares its purpose as "*the unification and empowerment of students worldwide to reduce tuition costs and advocate for free higher education"* (@FeesMustFall_, 2015).

Upon observation, the researcher found that the page does indeed show solidarity with South African students. The support was expressed through the contributions of students from different parts of the world, each of whom shared an uplifting or informative message. Accompanying these messages were photographs of individual

students or groups of students holding placards bearing the slogan #FeesMustFall. The user below justified the need for free education by linking it to their future:

> When you place a price on my education, you place a price on the future development of the world (#FeesMustFall, 29 October 2015).

However, it is the words in the following tweet which were posted in September 2016 that resonate with this study:

> Because of the #FeesMustFall 2015–2016 generation, I now know of things like the freedom charter, white monopoly, evil side of this [government]! (#FeesMustFall, 26 September 2016)

The text undoubtedly demonstrates that the Fees Must Fall movement, operating through X, effectively served as a means of raising awareness and providing education on the rights and knowledge that students required to become active agents of the movement.

The findings suggest that X was an influencer of change and identity formation in students because it emerged as a tool and media for students to engage with one another about concepts that affected the movement of #RMF and #FMF. The objective was to examine how alternative media influenced the identities of the movement's participants. The study found that alternative media content did indeed contribute to the participants' knowledge.

6.3.2.3 Media's Portrayal of the 2015–2016 Students

The study found that mainstream media channels had a negative effect on students which affected the validity of their participation in the RMF and FMF movements. It also found that the mainstream media sought to frame a specific theme and narrative about #Fallism for its audience. However, even with the negative press against them, students resolved that they had a responsibility to maintain their position within the movement and to use the media as an outlet to spread the message of RMF and FMF correctly. This finding reflects Newton's (1995) assertion about the (mainstream) media as the "Fourth Estate of the Realm," highlighting its role as an advocate for the state and its laws.

The participants of this study regarded mainstream media (both broadcast and print) as exhibitors of bias who adhered to a specific agenda rather than objectively reporting the ongoing events. This once again reflects Hoffman and Pompper's (2020) view that

mainstream media is limited to news values in its reporting of events. Furthermore, it aligns with Lee and Ahmed's (2023) perspective which highlights the mainstream media's role in diminishing the significance of protest movements by promoting a "protest paradigm" that marginalises protesters or protest movements. Participant 1 characterised the mainstream media's bias by observing the origins of the Fallism movement, referring to campuses like the University of Cape Town, WITS and Stellenbosch University as "Ivory Towers." The participant (1) contends that the mainstream news media pursued the movement with the intention of manipulating the interpretation of the protest:

> *So, it was a very interesting observation to make that they were quite biased, in the way they reported this [movement]. I think it showed in how the media houses were reporting [the news] and also where was this [movement] was happening. Like I said, they are ivory towers so for the most part, the reporting was caught off the ground, when things were hitting the fan in the ivory towers… the ivory towers being Wits, Stellenbosch, UCT and the University of Pretoria.*

The finding additionally shows that the students experienced a strong feeling of being misrepresented by mainstream media due to its use of descriptions that characterised them in a certain way instead of highlighting the reasons for their protests. The above assertion depicts Lee's (2014) and Lee and Ahmed's (2023) description of protest paradigm. The finding supports the idea that mainstream media was perceived as an adversary rather than an objective spectator, as evidenced by the phrases used to characterise the students.

This notion is supported by Participant 2 who defines mainstream media as an entity that fabricates the truth to cater to its readership, as dictated by its owners:

> *I feel that the news media misrepresented students who were involved in the protests for a very long time you know… we were made out to be very unruly, to be less ambitious and tenacious and that we were not doing well academically, that's why we [had all that] time for protest action.*

The above finding also supports Nkuna (2016) who asserts that the vocabulary used in media texts has a tendency to depict protesters as individuals lacking the ability to articulate their frustrations effectively and lacking a sense of emotional control. Therefore, the mainstream media's portrayal of protestors supports Newton's (1995) claim that the limited information provided in the media can endanger the security and well-being of media consumers.

Chimutengwende (1978) suggests that media users hold mainstream media responsible, as the law requires them to uphold the state, its security and its overall welfare. To put it simply, mainstream media's stance weakens its audience by fostering the development of a specific heuristic that the audience uses to interpret the rhetoric they encounter because, according to Pachur et al, (2012), the frequency of exposure to information about an event in the media can create a misleading perception of its truthfulness. In other words, if mainstream media labels an event as aggressive, its audience will perceive anything associated with that event as aggressive.

Participants 1 and 2's comments profile mainstream media as unreliable because they did not focus on the students but on the story they wanted to tell their audience. The above literature also supports the finding that mainstream media channels assumed that students were deliberately aiming to be unruly and disorderly, opting for violence instead of reasoning as a means to address their issues within the academic environment. The findings show that the students did not commit the violent behaviours that the mainstream media published. Participants noted that these acts were carried out by other individuals within society who were of a similar age group as the students. Mainstream media viewed and reported on these individuals who expressed their own concerns about social conditions or service delivery as students. This reinforces the mainstream media's commitment to news values, as noted by Hoffman and Pompper (2020) and the perspective of Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes (2014) who assert that protest movements may encounter challenges even when they attract the attention of mass media such as being depicted in a negative light, which hinders the objectives of the movement. Participant 7's narrative expands on this argument by recalling a radio host's criticism of the strategies used to highlight students' demands for an inclusive education system:

> *The media wasn't kind to the students. The media was very harsh. It was not a regime of truth. So even when they interview students, on radio, I remember I was listening to T-BO Touch, saying, 'guys, you are students, guys, you are educated, why can't you write a proposal? Do something much more intellectual rather than taking it to the streets and burning tires or blocking roads or why do you have to be vandals when you can engage on a higher level?' So, it was more of looking at students with a jaundiced eye… it was humiliating students.*

Participant 7's feedback further reveals that most protestors found the media's presence to be a novel concept, as journalists and broadcasters frequently

approached them for their opinions. The findings show journalists using their influence to selectively collect student comments, which likely supported the prevailing narrative of the time. Participant 9 presented a thorough analysis of mainstream media's influence, substantiating the notion that mainstream media harboured bias against the movement. Additionally, Participant 9 asserted that the media's influence caused discomfort among students, hindering their ability to express themselves effectively. Participant 9 further contended that this experience caused humiliation to individuals who engaged with the media because they subsequently regretted their remarks but were unable to modify their words.

Moreover, the findings reveal suspected unethical behaviour by mainstream media, particularly during periods of reduced coverage related to the protest. Participant 10 presumed that several students were solicited by mainstream media to produce content for publication or broadcasting, with the aim of generating news. The finding speaks, once again, to mainstream media's allegiance to news values (Hoffman & Pompper, 2020) as income generators for their channels. Participants categorised these individuals as, among other terms, "popularists," "media actors" and "celebrities" who did not fall within the identity of the students seeking to pursue social change in the system. Participant 10 further stated that the increase in such information impacted the movement negatively because it created a deliberate effort to promote a specific portrayal of the movement by the media:

> *I was not a fan of the presence of the media because [they] were distorting our revolution. They were sending wrong narratives. And look, to some people, the media is the only source of information that they have. And if you corrupt that, you've corrupted the entire movement in those people's minds. It felt to me that the media was in actual fact trying to do exactly what we were fighting against… They would come to them [students] and tell them, 'But it's quiet guys, can you do something?' For me, that was not revolutionary. All they were doing was acting.*

Over and above the role and coverage of the movement, some participants felt that the mainstream media's view of the movement was not holistic and that it lacked a sense of investigation into the lives of protesters and reasons behind the cause and purpose of the movement. Greef et al (2021) contrast this view as they found that while students were highly aware of the social injustice of the educational exclusion that sparked the movement, they also anchored themselves in the virtues of respect and tolerance, contrary to mainstream media's portrayal of them. The authors expand on the concept of social injustice as the violation of human rights regarding fair access to

opportunities and attempts to address historical injustices (Greef et al, 2021), brought on by apartheid's law of exclusion such as the Bantu Education Act referred to by Thobejane (2013) and Phillips (1999) in chapter 3.

Participant 7 exemplified the above virtue of respect by seemingly empathising with a fellow student while simultaneously lamenting the selective portrayal of the movement in mainstream media:

> *One of the most heart-breaking stories I heard is that there was a girl who stayed at one of the Reses, but because NSFAS only paid for school fees and accommodation, she had to hustle everything else… The media would never talk about those stories because [they made it seem] like we didn't want to study…*

The example given by Participant 9 also reflects Mogoboya's (2011) definition of Ubuntu, an African virtue that premised Black Consciousness as a communal life where individuals are integrated into the community and share a unified identity in various aspects.

The analysis of these findings suggests that the mainstream media primarily depicted the 2015–2016 student movement by portraying students as disorderly and lacking ambition. This portrayal is an example of protest paradigm as defined by Lee (2014), Wasserman et al, (2018) and David (2022). Instead of addressing the protesting students' grievances, the media chose to portray them as troublesome in order to justify their removal from the university to make room for those who would not pose a threat to it. The finding supports the view by Brown and Mourão (2022:738) that protest movements face difficulties in attaining public or mainstream media exposure without engaging in collective action.

6.3.3 Theme Three: ***Link between social protest and identity in the context of South Africa's social structures***

The findings have indicated a pattern of exclusion felt by students due to the social structure of education, whether regarding its financial model or its underlying principles which the students labelled "colonised." Van Wart, McIntyre and Hall (2023) define the concept of social exclusion as the phenomenon that occurs when there is a widespread lack of the nine factors identified as constituting social capital which are:

> (1) broadly shared norms and values, (2) a common identity, (3) perceptions of fairness across society, (4) a general sense of trust, (5) social reciprocity even with those of opposing ideologies, (6) bridging organisations and networks, (7)

> meaningful opportunities for participation in a variety of social contexts, (8) shared channels of communication and facts and (9) an overall sense of cultural inclusion or integration.

According to the authors, a “sense of social exclusion, no matter the facts or ideological position, encourages feelings of grievance, social disintegration or oppression, victimisation, defensiveness, hostility, extreme partisanship and self-defence” (Van Wart, McIntyre & Hall, 2023).

The present study uses Van Wart, McIntyre and Hall's (2023) concept of social exclusion to analyse the following findings which indicate that students participated in debates to address and rectify the feeling of social exclusion (Van Wart, McIntyre & Hall, 2023) they encountered at their respective institutions. The debates provided students with the chance to express their opinions and foster a feeling of belonging in the institutions that excluded them. For Participant 4, the debates were a pulling factor for them to join the movement towards transformation:

> *But it was only when we started having the debates [about], what must happen to the statue at UFS? What is the way forward for our institution? What are your views about the campaign for the removal of statues across the different institutions in South Africa? …that I actively participated [in the movement].*

Participant 3's perspective on the evolution of the discourse around the removal of the Rhodes Statue at the University of Cape Town is closely connected to Participant 4’s response. Although the two participants were based in different universities, the findings reveal their shared ideals based on a mutual vision to address the placement of colonial statues at their respective universities. Participant 3 cited the widespread message about the removal of the Rhodes statue emanating from the campaigns of SRC candidates and many other instances where the issue (of the statue) was raised. The participant (3) alluded to an incident in which a fellow alumnus threw excrement at the Rhodes statue, the social structure that connected the students. The student collected the excrement from a makeshift bucket toilet in one of Cape Town's townships to express his frustration with the social inequalities he had witnessed (Fairbanks, 2015). This finding highlights the enduring demographic social structure of apartheid policies at UCT in 2015 which neglected townships while maintaining urban spaces. Participant 3 described the incident as a symbolic act that represented the culmination of the students’ long-standing tensions:

> *Where [the movement] became mature, was when it was articulated that we are not against the statute per se, but about what the statute represents and the fact that this*

> *is only but the beginning. Removing a statute does nothing for the institutional culture, it does nothing for curriculum reform and it does nothing for why you have so few of UCT lecturers being Black.*

Participant 3 is elaborating on the social structures of race, the institution and its culture and the colonial era curriculum. This assertion highlights the clear difference between the White and Bantu education curriculums. According to Khanyile (2017, 00:45), this difference was a key aspect of the policy of the structure of separate development which undermined African history, culture and identity while promoting racist stereotypes. Participant 3 also elaborated on the concept rising from their psychological battle, arguing that "*everything [that had] to do with excellence [did] not have a Black face or [had] too few Black faces*." This argument draws on the macro-social structure of race (Merolla et al, 2012) which led to the participant's awareness and distress regarding their social status as well as their interpretation of their Black identity and their role in driving change within their institutions. The existence of colonial-era statues at their universities served as a reminder of the enduring presence of institutional racism. Universities, as described by Merolla et al (2012) serve as intermediate social structures that play a crucial role in shaping individuals' identities and determining their sense of belonging. The students' shared institutional experiences served as a reminder that they were being rejected by these structures. Participant 4 expounded on the maturation of the Fallism movement by providing a comprehensive definition of its depth and underlying concept:

> *[We were] fighting against the social, academic and economic inequalities that are deeply rooted in South Africa's higher education system.*

The findings show that the onset of this conflict rose from a strong desire for proactive transformation in their immediate environment for themselves and those who would follow them in years to come thus providing a better learning environment for them. The example confirms Stets and Burke's (2003) view of social structures as an abstract concept that emerges from individual actions over time. The structure of Black Consciousness aided the constant desire and belief in justice and fairness. This is because the term social structure encompasses all human actions or activities including law, architecture and organisations (Fleetwood, 2008). Participant 2 described their experience as follows:

> *From a personal point of view, which I think that's where most students were coming from, I think the biggest impetus was a need for change... in the environment where*

> *we were meant to learn and grow as young adults. [The environment] was very suffocating for people of colour, for Black students to be specific. Considering it meant that we were paving a way for… many other people who would come after us.*

The finding shows an unequivocal resoluteness and acceptance of the students' cultural and racial identity. In addition to the previously discussed theme of students advocating for future generations, the findings reveal a profound empathy among the participants towards their fellow students who faced educational denial due to their financial circumstances. Participant 8 cited this as stemming from the majority of students *"not having access to all the basic amenities of modern life".* The lack of access to life's "basic amenities" is a by-product of the exclusion of Black communities from the economy of South Africa. Majeke (1994), quoting Verwoerd, states:

> *…One of the important functions [these] new [Bantu] schools will serve is teach Africans the two official languages [English and Afrikaans]. This makes the African a better servant for Europeans because, the economic structure of [this] country, of course, results in large number of natives having to earn their living in the service of Europeans.*

The above text positions the allocation of wealth to the "European" white settlers in South Africa, while relegating the Black community to the role of labourers who generated the aforementioned wealth. The students of 2015–2016 are therefore the outcome of this apartheid model and social structure of separate development including separation from the economy. Making poverty a systemic outcome of the apartheid social structure.

Despite being granted an academic bursary and the opportunity to overcome the economic barriers to education, Participant 9 made the choice to join the Fees Must Fall movement for the benefit of those who could not study further, even at the risk of enduring social isolation from their peers and respective university community:

> *I joined the movement because of where I come from. There were many students who [were] not be able to go to university. They had no capacity to do whatever they wanted to pursue in life. But I had a bursary at that time. I was not even funded by the NSFAS. It is the environment that I came from that made me join the struggle.*

Participant 9's perspective and experience focus specifically on the structural and political environment of their upbringing, established by the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 (Boddy-Evans, 2021). The legislation resulted in the forced relocation of over three million Black persons to less favourable areas. The law, enacted in 1950, continued to have a significant impact in 2015 on Participant 9's university and life

experiences. Participant 9's escape from the socio-economic limitation left behind by the apartheid social structure was made possible by the students' ability to obtain a bursary. This brings to light, Mpofu's (2017: 352) assertion that change "without any structural alterations" ceases to be change. This is because, although the Group Areas Act was not in place in 2015, the failure to correct its legacy continued to affect students in 2015-2016.

However, students whose parents could not afford to pay their fees or did not receive bursaries relied on the NSFAS as a primary source of funding for their university tuition. NSFAS serves as an intermediate social structure by providing national financial aid to bridge the gap between individuals from low-income backgrounds and tertiary institutions. NSFAS's role is to improve and provide learning opportunities for marginalised students. To qualify for an NSFAS student loan, Participant 6 needed to demonstrate and assume a poverty role identity which Merolla et al (2012) define as a proximate social structure. Participant 6 described their application experience below:

> *…there's no dignity, there's just so much humiliation… because you have to prove your poverty, like you have to prove that you are poor. It was humiliating. I had to, I remember saying, okay, I must wear [the] dirtiest All Stars I have to show them that I need this.*

Similar to Participant 9's account, Participant 6's story sheds light on the outcome of apartheid's Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950, as a social structure of exclusion. Participant 6's experience suggests that NSFAS required more than a student's documented financial standing to process applications which is why they had to embody the physical image of desperation to be considered for the loan.

The findings also suggest that students encountered more pushback from existing social structures within their universities. This was narrated by Participant 1 who explained that financial exclusion was not only limited to registration and access to the institution, but it also meant being denied examination or re-entry into the system due to outstanding fees:

> *There were a lot of people who were excluded on a financial basis. For example, if you discover that someone has passed, it's the same person with whom you are studying. Despite their ability to pass the exam, they cannot proceed, receive their results or register for the next academic year due to financial constraints or unpaid fees.*

The finding is that money was a barrier to accessing and entering the education system. It was part of the reason students wanted to address the oppression embedded in the existing academic social structures and advocate for those who were unable to pursue their education due to financial constraints. The finding also suggests that students recognised the importance of adapting to the prevailing employment market. Furthermore, students anchored their conviction on the ruling party's manifesto which was developed based on the Freedom Charter, as Participant 7's feedback shows:

> *I think that was the reason why we actually had to do it (protest). Because you would expect that the qualifications, the degrees, the diplomas… are what the current market wants. So then, you would expect the government to be proactive about trying to give young students these qualifications. So then, we saw a gap or rather a mismatch between what they are saying (in the Freedom Charter) and what they want as well as in what they are giving us and what we have.*

The story of Participant 7 demonstrates that the students distrusted the government because they felt that it was being inconsistent with its promises and actions. The government is a social structure because it encompasses rules, relations, positions, processes, systems, values and meanings of governance (Fleetwood, 2008). The finding therefore suggests that students were relying on the government to assist them with access to the economy through education. However, the government's perceived inability to address these concerns fuelled the students' discontent and their determination to protest against the educational system which is regulated by the government.

The study also found that students like Participant 5 understood the role of disruption that comes with a protest. This participant (5) joined the movement because they learned early in life that disruption is the only language understood by one's oppressors without being "*drowned in bureaucracy*":

> *I felt that it was important to disrupt because disruption makes people listen, because now you are affecting them the same way you are being affected… if someone disrupts, they put you in their shoes, forcefully.*

Participant 5 felt that the only language they had access to in order to be understood was that of disruption. This finding supports the Gazette's (2020) report on Martin Luther King Jr.'s assertion that "protest is a language of the unheard." In addition to disruption, other participants alluded to embodying the nature of those who protested before them during the apartheid regime, stating that they learned the nature and

power of protest from their predecessors who were now in government and able to change policies to favour the masses. The practice of people coming together to form a group that opposed certain views in society is also a social structure because these groups form localised networks (Merolla et al, 2012). As Smith (1998) has also noted, social structures are made up of a variety of components including ethnic and demographic groups. These components are also found in localised networks such as anti-apartheid movements (Nkuna, 2016). Participant 10 states that they learned the practice of protest from their 1976 predecessors who marched for justice in their youth but appeared to abandon the cause once they were in power:

> *What we had to do was employ their tactics, because now they were employing strategies of their former oppressors. So, we had to act like them. And the only language that we knew, that they taught us the oppressor knows, is protest. So, when they became oppressors, we spoke to them using the medium of communication that they understood, which is protest.*

Participant 10 linked the two eras of protest namely the anti-apartheid movement with their movement and signified that the protestors, who are now in power, have become oppressors. This finding highlights Frantz Fanon's observation that "the change of the colonised self... is closely connected to the change of the colonial urban space" (Gibson, 2011).

It also suggests that democracy did not alter the social structure of apartheid to accommodate Black individuals and their economic and structural needs. The definition implies that physical transformation can only occur after a cognitive change, as advocated by Black Consciousness (Biko, 2017). The findings show that students achieved the latter through exposure to alternative media that profiled Black Consciousness. This exposure instilled in them confidence to stand up for a just cause. Participant 10's criticism is explained by Gibson (2011) who cites Fanon's insight that liberation leaders often fail to overcome and shed the colonial mindset that governed those positions when they assume the said vacant positions. This results in the continuation of existing power structures and the advancement of a liberation that adheres to colonial methods/structures, as observed by Fanon. The finding is that without completely transforming the policies that governed South Africa before 1994, the governing party, as alluded to by Participant 10, adopted the same structures that oppressed them when they themselves were younger.

The students of 2015–2016 protested based on their collective identity which was exclusion from the education system and social structure. They united in their quest for inclusion in a system that acknowledged their Black identity and addressed the socio-economic inequalities of the previous system. The feedback from Participant 4 summarises this view:

> *…it was through Black Consciousness that we were conscientised about the inequality that was happening around us. And it was through Black consciousness that we found ourselves being conscious about the statues in the area... If there was no Black Consciousness, then we would have just seen the statues as, just statues. But because we knew that we needed representation in one way or the other, we were conscientised through the movement of Black Consciousness that we also need to be represented by [our own] statues.*

The finding demonstrates the role of Black Consciousness in shaping the identity of students in the 2015–2016 academic year. Black Consciousness encouraged the students to view themselves as Black students from a positive perspective. By shaping this identity, Black Consciousness also contributed to the students' agency to protest against what they now saw as racial and systemic injustice.

Another key finding regarding social structures is the configuration of university residence. Some students struggled to find placement in university residences because they could not afford to or because the residence was too small. They stated that NSFAS provided funds for tuition but not enough to sustain their needs on campus. This finding is supported by Williams (2021) who attributes the shortage of university residence to lack of infrastructure development by previously disadvantaged universities (those previously governed by the Bantu Education Act) and to the amalgamation of students at historically white universities who could not afford the fees associated with residence. Historically, these "*affluent*" (white) universities recruited their students from a segment of the population that could afford the associated fees.

Participant 5 states that their residence allocation was based on academic standing and participation in the residence's activities. This included taking part in athletic tournaments and/or cultural events organised by the residence. The absence of engagement however jeopardised a student's placement in the residence. Participant 5 mentioned that participation demanded time, which was not always available to some students because they were using their time to either catch up on schoolwork or translate lectures from Afrikaans to English in order to understand the lecture and

succeed academically. According to Participant 5, the lack of student accommodation posed a risk to the security of students who would otherwise have chosen to live near campus. The alternative was commuting for long hours on public transport which resulted in students missing out on various cultural activities that contributed to the "Res Experience." The finding is another example of the outcome of apartheid's Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 (Boddy-Evans, 2021) which forced millions of Black people to relocate to the outskirts of newly developed urban areas intended for white people because accessing historically white universities from a township meant that students needed to find a way of bridging the distance by using public transport. In parallel, the participant also recounted an incident involving a white student who lived at a nearby flat and also had placement at the university residence. The aforementioned student would occasionally visit their residence to experience its environment, while they primarily lived in their flat:

> *Then you've got a white student, who's got a place at Res for the experience. When you try and explain to someone like that, that you know it's not okay for you who has a place to stay, open a room for someone who needs a room, because I had to travel far.*

The finding suggests that students were aware of the need to protest against this exclusion, as student accommodation was not a social experience for them but rather a necessary attachment to pursue their education. The study also found a frequent reference to the perception isolation, both within the boundaries of the university setting and within the comfort of the students' homes. Both scenarios involve proximate social structures (Merolla et al, 2012). Some participants recalled how their peers adapted to the pressure of assimilating into their new surroundings in order to conform and/or adapt to their university experience. Participant 3's account provides additional insight into how other students altered their speaking style to conform to the institution's norms and try to fit in:

> *Certainly, you were torn between accepting yourself for who you are or accepting that there's something wrong about aspects of the way that you are and you needed to change. I remember some students began to "twang" more. The way they spoke was much smoother. So, people were training how they were speaking and trying to change the way that they spoke. So, you couldn't help but notice that something was going on.*

This finding illustrates students' identity crises and cognitive dissonance and reveals that their identity as Black students was not enough to occupy the shared spaces with students of other races. Meer (2019) defines this paradoxical theme of duality as

double consciousness whereas Harmon-Jones and Mills (2019:) define it as cognitive dissonance which manifests when new information contradicts a person's existing beliefs or views about themselves. Such was the case with the students in 2015–2016; social interactions reinforce the negative stereotypes revealed by their institutions and the students grappled with the pressure of facing rejection due to their racial identity, all while striving to maintain relatability with their loved ones and friends back home. The feedback from Participants 1 and 7 illustrate this contrast:

> *Being Black for me, means… being aware, not naïve to prejudices that exist [around you], by virtue of the colour of your skin but also being aware of historical elements of what being Black means, knowing what the challenges were before [that moment] because then you are able to appreciate how this is not just a new thing, it's a continuum of what has been happening in the past. It's what has previously been called colonialism, then neo-colonialism and then they called it apartheid in South Africa.*

Participant 1 also reflected on their navigation around campus, trying to find their place in a structure that openly rejected their Black identity. The participant also highlighted the significance of understanding history as a method of interpreting their experiences on campus. Participant 7 however was affected by family members' perspective on their decision to join the movement that appeared to pose a threat to their future:

> *There was a moment when I felt ashamed, you know? I would visit my parents for maybe a weekend when I got a chance and they would tell me to focus on my education. They were not understanding [the purpose of the movement]. They pointed to the fact that they were "doing everything for me, but that I wanted to ruin [my] future.*

Participant 7 added that what made the misunderstanding more difficult was that the family members understood the concept of being part of a "struggle" because their father was part of the 1976 generation that stood against the Bantu education and apartheid system. The participant had expected acceptance and approval from family instead of being reprimanded or criticised.

Participant 5 provides context for why students risked their academic placement in exchange for justice in the same structures that made life unbearable for them. This finding demonstrates that even while navigating their cognitive dissonance and risking expulsion from university, students made the deliberate decision to engage in protests due to their long-term vision:

> *I would not willingly leave my education to go sit outside in the cold and [insist that] people mustn't learn unless something was fundamentally wrong. I'm not crazy. And for [people] to think [that I would do that] for attention is [them] calling me crazy.*

Therefore, people need to understand that if I'm taking extreme measures, it's because the situation is extreme.

The above finding suggests that although the students were profiled and viewed as displaying characteristics of mental instability or lack of responsibility, the cause for justice and fair administration at their universities outweighed the reputation they were branded with. The students addressed their social structures because they had invested in their identity. This therefore shows the link between social protest and identity development.

6.5 Chapter conclusion

The chapter presented the findings from the 2015–2016 interviews and media samples. It explored channels that contributed to conscientising the youth of 2015–2016 about their identity such as debating clubs, social gatherings on campus and the arts in the form of poetry and music performances. These media provided students with building blocks for identity development and solidified the saliency of their identity. The findings indicate that for students in the 2015–2016 movements, the introduction of new environments and institutions exposed them to and heightened their identity of Blackness and its significance within a racialised society. The construction of their identity was a gradual process that included information sessions, input from educators and interpersonal encounters on their respective campuses. This led to a strong sense of acceptance of their Blackness within a predominantly white educational setting.

The chapter also explored the concept of media as a fluid entity which encompasses alternative media channels such as X, clothing, books and films as well as the language used in X feeds. These media channels allowed students the freedom to express their views without the influence of established mainstream media platforms. The findings also revealed that students emerged as the main sources of identity conscientisation to one another, sharing first-hand experiences about issues like institutional rejection. The theme of Black pain and cognitive dissonance emerged as students struggled to balance their existing beliefs about the injustice of their universities and the labels attached to them.

The findings also reveal that the use of X added to the contribution of knowledge about the two movements namely Rhodes and Fees Must Fall. Therefore, X served as a

platform of engagement, successfully spreading the message of Fallism. The message reached not only the South African audience but also an international audience that supported South African students and contributed in its own way to amplify the message of decolonised and fee-free education. The chapter adds value to this study by narrating the events of 2015–2016 from the viewpoints of the participants and the media they encountered. It also sought to uncover links to the 1976 movement to understand the role of media, social structures and identity development in youth to attain social change.

Lastly, the chapter found that universities are social structures but so are protest groups, statues, existing governance structures at universities and apartheid laws. Chapter 7 will discuss and analyse these findings in greater detail, comparing them with existing literature.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

7.1 Introduction and context of findings

This chapter analyses and integrates the findings of both cases of the study namely the 1976 student movement and the 2015-2016 Fallism movement in order to examine whether they have responded to the research questions of the study. The chapter includes findings from content analysis of SASO Newsletters and X posts and merges these findings with the researcher's analysis along with a review of the literature that guided the study. The primary goal of this study was to examine the role of the media in relation to its significance as a means of communication and potential source of influence in the process of identity development and awareness in protest movements. The study aims to illustrate how the media can inspire social change, starting with individual identity development and extending to broader societal impact.

Objective 1: ***To determine the source of the conscientisation of student activists***

The findings of this study reveal that student bodies like the Student Representative Council (SRC), the South African Student Movement (SASM) and the Student Christian Movement (SCM) conscientised the group of 1976 about racism and the government's attempt to exclude them from participating in the economy. Whereas the group of 2015-2016 was conscientised through established student protests such as the South African Student Congress (SASC), the Young Communist League (YCL), the Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania (PASMA) and political parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) student wing which formed an understanding about what the students were experiencing at their respective universities. Moreover, the inclusion of Black Consciousness university students in high schools solidified the conscientisation of the group of 1976. Moloi (2011) and Hlongwane (2015) state that these students, employed as teachers in schools across the country, incorporated the message of Black Consciousness into their teaching methods. The teachers provided the group of 1976 with a unifying concept of Black solidarity against a narrative that spoke of them as non-entities (non-white) which was affecting their identity and how

they viewed themselves. The students adopted Black Consciousness as a remedy to the apartheid rhetoric of division and destruction of Black communities, seeing it as a concept that addressed the collective experience of Black individuals. Black Consciousness, therefore, presented a symbiotic refuge that bound together the lived experience in Black communities with concepts that defined it.

An additional source of conscientisation for the group of 1976 was the introduction of Black theology to students through the Student Christian Movement (SCM). The researcher found that Black theology helped define an inclusive belief system for students who may have identified themselves as Christians but lacked the scriptural basis to latch on to it to solidify their identity because Christianity was predominantly viewed by the community as a white religion. According to Dr Munroe (Jude-Johnson, 2021), the establishment of a theology validates an ideology to which it belongs. Therefore, it was in defining their Christian identity that the youth of 1976 were able to disrupt and stand up to the physical presence of apartheid in their townships (Mpofu, 2017). This source of identity developed confidence in their faith which fuelled their consciousness. The study finds similarities between the formation of Black theology through the SCM and the Afrikaner religion which developed as a theology to support and cement the concept of separate development. The exclusion of the Black population from the deity of the Afrikaner and therefore the South African identity was further solidified by the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 as profiled by Boddy-Evans (2021).

The researcher found that this fight against exclusion was sustained from the era of the 1976 Uprising to the 2010s because the participants of the Fallism movement reported it as a source of conscientisation for their *otherness* at tertiary institutions. This exclusion was primarily attributed to the perception of being overshadowed by the historical positions held by their respective institutions which were previously reserved for white students, such as the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (Van Wyk, 2016), as discussed in Chapter 3. The students felt profoundly excluded from their respective tertiary institutions due to their skin colour and social-economic backgrounds. The experience made them realise that the system treated them as inferior, and unequal compared to their white peers. This realisation was particularly difficult and painful for some of the students (participants) because they

had attended primary and high schools with students of all races and saw themselves as equal to them. They were confronted by the realisation that their race held an inferior status to that of other students. This explanation exemplifies the concept of double consciousness, described by Meer (2019) and Smith, (2021) as the experience of embodying two identities at the same time. According to Smith (2021), double consciousness is the “sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on with amused contempt and pity”. The study finds the use of the term "soul" in the above definition compelling, as it represents the essence of an individual's existence and their perception of identity. The concept, therefore, refers to an ongoing self-evaluation based on the opinions and perspectives of others, which often leads to feelings of humiliation and pain. The finding corroborates Ahmed’s (2019) assertion that the students were drawn to the Black Consciousness philosophy due to their personal encounters with Black pain—the cumulative suffering endured by Black individuals through successive generations. This pain and humiliation were, therefore, a source of conscientisation for the students of 2015-2016 who expressed the need for a validating stance on their race, which was necessary to address the identity gap created by this realisation (of being considered an inferior race). The study asserts that the introduction of Black Consciousness through social engagements such as meetings and plenary sessions played a crucial role in developing a positive outlook of their identity, similar to the experiences of the youth of 1976.

Both student groups derived a sense of collective identity from their interactions with fellow students, which provided them with solace and a secure environment to address their concerns. This statement aligns with Klandermans' (2014:4) claim that individuals who possess a shared social identity reinforce their sense of belonging within that group thereby establishing a cohesive and unique identity. The students' recognition of their shared Black identity highlighted their alienation from students of different racial backgrounds. This supports Mudavanhu's (2017) argument that the unifying force of pain, specific to their Blackness, was a catalyst for reformation and change within their unique environments.

The collective identity resulted in the students’ fight against an oppressive Bantu education system which imposed Afrikaans as a medium of learning in 1976 and in

exclusion both in the financial and education systems they were encountering in 2015-2016. It was the exposure to Black Consciousness within their respective environments that triggered the spark to seek and explore a positive identity. Both movements were characterised by these open discussions, which strengthened the idea of unity among students in their pursuit of a socially inclusive objective. The study found that students preferred a more covert or clandestine method of communication such as hiding SASO Newsletters in their luggage to distribute them around the country so that could share knowledge and ideas. This finding was more prevalent in the 1976 study, which also spoke to the political climate under which the students operated. The students risked imprisonment in order to facilitate a source that would contribute and shape the identity of their peers without being influenced or framed by mainstream media sources. This, in turn, had a significant impact on their sense of identity and cognitive processes (Morreira, 2017). This study therefore asserts that the students mutually became each other's primary sources of information by exchanging knowledge with one another. They prepared and developed their identity, making it prominent and noticeable, which therefore offered them a sense of safety to embrace and navigate life through its lens.

The study found that student protests in South Africa, based on the 1976 uprising and the Fallism movement of 2015-2016, have thrived on the basis of covert communication. The finding therefore, questions the impartiality of journalism and mainstream media, which Von Zabern and Tulloch (2020) profile as influencers of information because they define, frame and shape how their audience views the world. The students chose an independent media channel to define and cultivate a positive identity for themselves because their cause was against the policies of their respective governments. The selection of alternative media offered a relevant, uninfluenced flow of information because both student groups understood that it fell upon them as Black individuals to liberate the minds of the Black communities to which they belonged (Maimela, 1999).

The writers and contributors of these alternative media channels (SASO Newsletter and X) sought to define the meaning of Black Consciousness along with its role in building solidarity amongst its readers. The study asserts that SASO Newsletters and X in addition to student representative bodies and other platforms for social

engagement, played a significant role in shaping and defining the concept of Black identity among Black students in South Africa.

Furthermore, the intentional use of language and inclusivity within the Black Consciousness philosophy gave the students a character and valuable belief system that developed an identity to be proud of. This finding corroborates Serpe's (1987), definition of identity which underscores the relationship between an individual, their society (social structure) and the function they fulfil within their social structures. It also aligns with Fairbank's (2015) perspective on identity as a human condition that combines one's present condition with their past (the understanding of their history) as well as Mpungose's (2016) suggestion that reflecting on one's lived experiences enables them to fully understand their past and use those reflections to shape their future. The study asserts that the key aspect of this identity concept is that connecting one's past and present not only builds a thorough knowledge of an individual's identity, but it is also crucial for shaping their future.

In the end, the study found that the primary source that led to the conscientisation of the students was predominantly the Black Consciousness philosophy. The concept was spread through student organisations like SASM, SRCs and PASMA. Furthermore, the students' experience of isolation from the education system prompted them to actively pursue a more empowering sense of identity thereby developing Black Consciousness. The establishment of a collective identity through the framework of Black Consciousness granted the students a feeling of solace and assurance in their sense of self, which presented them with the chance to perceive themselves in a new light. Finally, the philosophy of Black Consciousness was disseminated through established alternative media platforms (SASO Newsletters and X), which provided students with the chance to control the narrative surrounding their identity, free from the influence of mainstream media.

Objective 2: ***The role media played in conscientising and developing the identity of the movement participants***

Media is a platform on which various players such as newspapers play a role in educating and entertaining the public (Morris & Ogan, 2018). This study has positioned

literature, oral history, clothing, art, poetry, social internet-based media and newsletters as forms of media. The latter are defined by Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) and Rauch (2015) as alternative media.

Media undergoes continuous evolution and development

Based on this position, this study concludes that media was indeed a contributor and role player in youth's conscientisation and identity development. In 1976, the media featured books and banned materials inspired by the Black Power Movement of America, providing students with a means to express their frustration with the Bantu education system. This study, therefore, adds to Hirschman's (1990) finding that the Black Power movement and the study of negritude by African intellectuals were the two factors that helped the youth of 1976, especially those with SASO-affiliated teachers, become Black Conscious. Their pursuit of knowledge through written texts drove the youth of 1976 to take pride in their role as researchers. Although libraries initially served as a platform for fostering discussions, providing students with a safe space to discuss new concepts, they eventually developed into a centre for exchanging information and exploring new ideas found within the books they were reading. Their aptitude for reading sparked their curiosity further, prompting them to read newspapers, as they were regarded as central sources of information regarding the state's activities and information about Black Consciousness figures as profiled by Gerhard (1994). As suggested by Mpofu (2017), this quest for knowledge was a form of disruption because the students used the information to challenge the existing and socially accepted stereotypes about Blackness. A majority of the participants cited mainstream media like *The World and The Weekend World* as reliable sources that enhanced their understanding of social differences between Black and White racial groups due to their presentation of information. Participants felt as though the journalists at these publications sympathised with the issues faced by the students because they seemed to be reporting from a Black lens unlike newspapers like the Rand Daily Mail, which, although liberal, continued to refer to Black people as non-white (Heffernan & Nieftagodien, 2016).

The study adds to Pather's (1999) assertion that Percy Qoboza's editorship shaped this perspective because he was an outspoken critic of apartheid and used his platform to expose the hidden ills of apartheid South Africa. Baines (2007) illustrates this

assertion with the story of photojournalist Sam Nzima who worked at Qoboza's *The World* and not only captured the evidence of the 1976 uprising but also received support and validation to use his image by the newspaper's editor. Nzima's photograph of an injured young Hector Pietersen carried by another young man exposed South Africa's hidden reality of apartheid to the international media and raised awareness about the violent situation in South Africa (Nzima, 2014). It is essential to acknowledge that the Afrikaans mainstream media played a significant role in supporting and justifying apartheid. According to Wasserman (2010), it positioned itself as a reliable source of information for white South Africans but in so doing, it withheld information from its readers, creating an environment that prevented them from understanding the true state of their society (Mouton, 2005). Therefore, media like *The World* newspaper were essential to breaking this mould of the Afrikaner media deception, not only for its Black readers but also for South Africa and the international audience at large. By giving the 1976 students a platform to showcase their grievances, *The World* newspaper validated their voices, concerns and frustrations.

Findings from the 2015-2016 movement also revealed the evolution of mainstream media with the announcement of the Rhodes statue's removal. According to the findings, *Bloomberg* supported the RMF when it called the statue's removal a toppling of an apartheid relic by the students on its X account (Section 6.3.2.2). Fairbank's (2015) analysis of this event examined the students' understanding of the statue as a symbol of the University of Cape Town's celebration of white culture, which included elements such as lack of mental health support for Black students who were exposed to institutionalised racism for the first time. By representing the movement in a neutral manner, *Bloomberg* portrayed what Wasserman et al, (2018) and David (2022) describe as the mainstream media's ability to shape public opinion. This also illustrates the mainstream media's ability to bolster and use its platform to amplify the voices of marginalised groups in society, serving as a supportive framework rather than an oppressor to the needs of those challenging the system of oppression. The findings demonstrate that mainstream media has the capacity to align itself with activists in order to emphasise and draw attention to social injustice and ensure that the state is held responsible for upholding fairness and justice for its citizens.

Mainstream media's use of protest stories—Profit, paradigm or protesters' cognitive dissonance? The cancer of conformity

In contrast to *The World* newspaper's role in 1976, Bird and Garda (1996: 4) state that the National Party sanctioned the media to profile the 1976 students as "marauding mobs and looters" and described them as "intimidators, saboteurs, and murderers" to perpetuate the criminal image of young protesters. Chimutengwende (1978) argues that the national press or mainstream media had a duty to uphold the state, its values and the interests of the ruling class. Tyali (2020) also states that newspapers played a crucial role during the apartheid era in promoting South Africa's existing apartheid system through propaganda. Chimutengwende (1978) and Tyali (2020) both portray mainstream media as an influential medium that the apartheid state intentionally used to propagate the message and validity of apartheid to its audience. The state-owned mainstream media altered the narrative of the 1976 protest by categorising the students as "marauding mobs and looters," thereby shifting the emphasis and interpretation of the protest from a legitimate grievance to portraying the students as dangerous. Wasserman (2010) supports the above assertion, arguing that the Afrikaans language media served as a validating institution for apartheid by positioning itself as a source of information that was "embedded in the emotional, psychic, spiritual, social, economic, political and psychological lives of its community".

Similarly, the students of 2015-2016 expressed a strong sense of misrepresentation by mainstream media which they perceived as characterising them negatively rather than objectively highlighting the reasons for their protests. The findings suggest that mainstream media portrayed the 2015-2016 students as "disorderly and lacking ambition" to pursue financial gain for their publications. Hoffman and Pompper (2020), who assert that mainstream media operate within a framework of news values to assess the competitiveness of a story, support this finding. The aforementioned statement demonstrates how mainstream media uses a protest paradigm which Lee (2014) and Lee and Ahmed (2023) characterise as a negative portrayal of protesters to generate readership and income for their publications.

The mainstream media's deliberate portrayal of protesters as harmful resulted in a sense of cognitive dissonance among them, as discussed under Objective 3. According to the protest paradigm, the purpose of mainstream media's frame was to

suppress the 2015-2016 protesters with the aim of disengaging them from the movement and ultimately bringing the protest to an end. Dlamini (King David Studios, 2014, 6:53) explained his recollection of this particular experience thus:

> *We were not criminals; we were not rebels. When young people raise their voice, they are labelled as hooligans. That's the biggest cancer that deals with activism, causing young people to conform*.

The aforementioned description highlights the impact of the protest paradigm, prevalent in mainstream media in 2015 and 2016, on student protesters' thoughts and identities. To counteract this portrayal, the students self-identified as a "woke" generation, a term that Dlamini (King David Studios, 2014) argues replaced the prevalent term "conscious" among youth in the 1970s. Being "woke" entailed being aware of practices that were not apparent to others thereby adding the responsibility of enlightening them about these practices. The cancer of conformity, alluded to by Dlamini, disarms the purpose of activism because those in the line of duty frequently experience the struggle of cognitive dissonance. This internal conflict is caused by the challenge of determining what is morally right or wrong, while simultaneously adopting a critic's lens to define the views of what the protest is about.

The South African student movement heuristic in mainstream media and the youth's resistance to it

The study reveals that the characterisation of South African student movements as violent and criminal dates back to the 1970s mainstream media frame. Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) defines framing as a process that prioritises certain aspects of reality thereby drawing attention to them at the expense of others. This finding also validates Dixon’s (2017) assertion that mainstream media frequently portrays Black people as a destabilising force in society. The above assertion highlights the mainstream media's development of a heuristic that portrays and channels the concept of Blackness as inept and dangerous. This, in turn, incites self-hatred within the Black community while instilling fear in the white community) and acts as a tool to divide and turn Black individuals against their own people. Therefore, this approach and portrayal by mainstream media blurs the distinction between activism and anarchy because when Black persons direct their anger towards one another, they shift the focus from the initial injustice towards internal conflict. Grills (2015) characterises this phenomenon as the fabrication of truth about one's identity based on fictitious truths. This view

highlights Miller and Philo's (2001) assertion that journalists have the ability to depict the world in countless ways without any objective reality (or accountability) to determine the accuracy of the selected portrayal. Essentially, the public accepts published information as absolute truth. This characterisation supports Pachur et al's (2012) availability-by-recall analysis which involves retrieving instances of risks from one's social networks or structures. The study found that mainstream media reused the same media frame from 1976 to characterise students as disruptive in 2015-2016, as it was a readily available and familiar heuristic to reference student activism and protest.

Despite this characterisation and media frame, the youth of 1976 made a significant contribution to history by exposing apartheid to an international audience through their uprising. However, unlike their counterparts in 2015-2016, they were unable to physically remove colonial structures such as apartheid statues, primarily because this move would have been fatal for them. They instead, initiated a butterfly effect (Ghys, 2015; Manning, 2017) that began with activism, resulted in Sam Nzima's photograph of the movement (Baines, 2007) and culminated with Percy Qoboza's editorial mandate to publish the movement in *The World* newspaper (Pather, 1999). This communication or link of events is what Brown and Mourão (2022) describe as mainstream media's role of allowing citizens to exercise their right to demand that the government provide solutions to their grievances. *The World* newspaper acted as an ally to the students, similar to what Bloomberg did for the 2015 RMF when it tweeted about the students *toppling* an apartheid relic.

In the activities of these movements, both student groups exemplified and personified the character of *Ubuntu*, the African principle and identity that forms the foundation of Black Consciousness. Mogoboya (2011) defines *Ubuntu* as the recognition of a collective existence in which individuals integrate into a community and share a united identity. It was demonstrated in how they valued justice over comfort, solidarity over selfish gain and by embracing a vision to improve the lives of all Black South African students in their respective eras. They established a community of activism by openly addressing the perceived oppression they faced.

Impact of alternative media on youth

The study also found that alternative media (Atton, 2008; Sandoval & Fuchs, 2010; Rauch, 2015) played an important role in the cognitive development and worldview of both student groups. Rauch (2015) asserts that alternative media offers users information that is often overlooked, socially provocative or diverse compared to mainstream media's content. One such media was SASO Newsletters in 1976 and X in 2015-2016, which the study found to be, as Rauch (2015) describes alternative media, provocative and diverse in contrast to mainstream media. The SASO Newsletters actively provided their readers with a historical perspective on identity and Black Consciousness, while also repositioning Africa's contributions to the world as a desirable entity. The newsletters achieved their role of informing their readers that they are part of a lineage of people who have an understanding of how the world works, describing this knowledge as the reason colonists sought sole ownership of Africa and its peaceful people.

The SASO Newsletters highlighted the necessity for its Black audiences to establish their independence according to their inherent African identity rather than seeking validation from a colonial and white perspective. This finding is supported by Khanyile's (2017, 5:33) assertion that the goal of Black Consciousness was to "make black people proud of themselves and their colour, instead of trying to be white, which was physically impossible and mentally frustrating". Mbembe (2017) asserts that people who are profiled by a popular view (such as mainstream media) tend to perceive themselves solely within that context and opt to follow its predetermined course. The Bantu education system aimed to establish control and power over the identities of Black people. Mbambo (2017) asserts that other individuals, imposed Blackness (or Bantu) on Black people as a metaphorical garment, aiming to restrict them within its boundaries. However, this study confirms Khanyile's (2017) findings that Black Consciousness profoundly impacted the youth of 1970, freeing them from the brainwashing of Bantu education and fostering a sense of unity and pride in their identity. Furthermore, the SASO Newsletters, functioning as alternative media, vehemently denounced the use of skin-lightening creams, which had gained popularity in mainstream newspaper advertisements, for their perceived devaluation of Black skin's value and beauty. In so doing, the SASO Newsletters counteracted the mainstream media's categorisation of the Black race.

The book *I Write What I Like* by Steve Biko, which is a compilation of his columns from SASO Newsletters with the same title, had a significant impact on the Fallists of 2015-2016. This finding establishes a connection between the two student groups under study, as they share not only the same ideology but also the same content that shaped the youth in 1976. The students (2015-2016) believed that Biko's work effectively conveyed the experiences of Black South Africans and provided valuable historical context. Their observation of how language represents their racial identity along with their struggle to express the experiences and significance of being a person of African descent in the global context shaped their sense of identity and social position. These alternative media streams, SASO Newsletters and Biko's *I Write What I Like* articulated the Black identity within the context of the Black Consciousness movement (Naidoo, 2015).

The student activists of 2015-2016 turned to the social media site X to engage and share ideas with other users. According to Ogidi (2015), social media are technological platforms and network sites that provide information and web-based services that allow individuals and corporations to construct public and private identities without regulation. According to Ogidi's (2015) definition, the power of social media lies in the benefit of secrecy for users who opt to remain anonymous. Furthermore, X, as a social media site, helped develop strong relationships and it overcame geographical limitations while also offering immediacy and additional features such as retweets (Mokonehatse, 2018) to help sustain a topic's longevity. The study found that X posts, like SASO Newsletters, used intentional language to foster a sense of unity and consciousness among the students of 2015-2016. The tone and words used on X were emotive and persuasive, encouraging readers to see history as a teaching tool so that they could identify the injustices of the past. According to Fairbanks (2015), this form of identity development is the integration of a person's present with their past, making the knowledge of one's history a vital tool in building a solid identity. The Fallism movement gained traction on X through dialogues that called for transformation in the education system of South Africa which, according to Hodes (2016), helped to strengthen the group's collective identity. The finding is supported by Mudavanhu (2017) and Frassinelli (2018) who also add that the alternative media, X was the catalyst for the protest movement, emphasising its role in enhancing students' awareness and forming their identities. Mare's (2014) findings align with this claim,

because she states that social media effectively conveys the indignation and discontent of protestors. X was therefore used to address and rectify previous disparities brought on by the incorrect representation of Blackness by mainstream media channels.

The study found that X contributed to the deliberate shaping of the participants' identity development, saliency and importance. The movement's main concern was not the statue's physical structure (Ahmed, 2019) or the removal of tuition fees but rather the importance of the participants' sense of identity and how to hold the state accountable for proper and fair governance. The study also validates Von Zabern and Tulloch's (2020) view of media producers, because X authors used their power to shape how their audience perceived the world by framing their thought processes and opinions. Therefore, X helped to affirm the collective power of identity, the significance of unity and its potential to bring about positive change. The study found that the debates on X in which young people actively participated, contributed to the conscientisation and meaning of their Blackness and their understanding of historical and social practices attached to it. This finding supports Fairbanks (2015) and Ahmed's (2019) criticism of the elimination of history from South Africa's curriculum in the mid-1990s. This is due to the students' anger at the lateness of their discovery of Black history, which they discovered while searching for materials on Black Consciousness. It further exemplifies Linden's (2017) assertion that rather than ignore history, this group of 2015-2016 student activists confronted it and called on other universities across the country to join them by using social media and hashtags, which changed the way information was published (Van Laer, 2011).

SASO Newsletters and X sought to remind and unite readers about their collective identity as Black individuals rather than causing division among them. This highlights Lushaba's argument in "The Hustlers Corner SA" (2023) which emphasises the individualistic nature of Western culture. Lushaba contends that Western culture prioritises the individual over the community, whereas Black Consciousness actively distinguishes the Black community from the values and cultural norms of white communities. SASO Newsletters and X achieved this mandate by distinguishing and defining the Black identity for their respective audiences. There was very little opportunity for their content to be misconstrued as it was written in alternative media

and shared widely to develop and synchronise a unified identity within the Black community.

Media is fluid, but it also shapes and influences identity

The study found that the use of alternative media was not limited to X and SASO Newsletters. Most participants in the 1976 uprising expressed an affinity for American musicians such as Nina Simone, Brooke Benton, Isaac Hayes and Rare-Earth whose music served to raise awareness among young individuals about the issue of oppression. In addition, they established a connection with the genre of reggae whose lyrical content inspired them to view life from a different perspective. The study found additional factors that students used to construct their identities within a broader social context. This finding is also supported by Khanyile (2017). The Fallists also found music to be a defining factor, citing the inclusion of *"i-Gwijo"* as a solidifier of their identity formation. Sehume (2023) asserts that this call-and-response style of singing is deeply rooted in Xhosa tradition. The lyrics imbued the students of 2015-2016 with the courage to pursue their journey of self-discovery and justice. The finding validates Hosseini's (2022) assertion that identity is a conceptual framework shaped by an individual's beliefs, characteristics and interests. Music broadened the students' understanding of themselves by expanding their worldview with a Black and African consciousness slant which contributed to the development of their identity.

This study revealed notable parallels in the socialisation of students in both study groups. After centralising the acceptance and embrace of Black Consciousness, both student groups showcased their identity through visual texts like dashiki fabrics and uncombed Afros. These visual cues served as acts of resistance and symbols of affiliation with Black Consciousness, effectively raising awareness in a non-threatening and impactful manner. They helped transition Black Consciousness from being an internal psychological concept to becoming an external identifier. Khanyile (2017) who describes the youth's uptake of African print clothing in 1976 as a celebration of African heritage and a psychological liberation from Bantu education, supports this finding. The principles of Black Consciousness impacted and transformed both the 1976 and the 2015-2016 activists (Morreira, 2017; Ahmed, 2019). The adoption of dashiki fabrics symbolised what Grills (2015) defines as psychological and emotional freedom from the societal narrative imposed by

mainstream media. This, in turn, played a vital role in imagining a different future for Black individuals.

The findings show that media is a fluid concept, which also plays a significant role in shaping and influencing identity development in its audience. In both student groups, the golden thread was the desire to find and pursue a purpose greater than education. The media was instrumental in fostering this desire. The study has also shown that mainstream media can coexist with protest movements, not necessarily as critics but as objective bystanders, as evidenced by *The World* and *Bloomberg*'s involvement in both movements. Furthermore, the study highlights the media's potential as a powerful tool for developing heuristics about social topics.

This discussion and findings support Loya and McLeod's (2020) view that social protests are a form of political expression that seeks to bring about social or political change in society. It also affirms the symbiotic relationship between mainstream media coverage of protest movements and their influence on the creation of public opinion. However, without proper regulation, media coverage and protests can significantly influence societal perspectives on specific topics. The findings suggest, therefore, that part of the purpose of the 1976 uprising and the 2015-2016 Fallism movement was to protest against the imposed identity of Blackness. This includes the participants' views on social grievances stemming from their respective social structures defined and cemented by the apartheid regime. The latter will be discussed in the next section.

Objective 3: ***The correlation between social protest and identity within the framework of South Africa's social structures***

The study has defined social structures as any product of human activity such as law, architecture or social classes. Additionally, they can be categorised into three distinct groups namely macro, intermediate and proximate (Merolla et al*,* 2012). The study argues that apartheid was a social structure because it was man made and developed legislature that sought to oppress people based on a social class system. This is also true about churches, libraries and debating clubs where students met to engage new ideologies that helped shape their identities.

Apartheid was a comprehensive ideology and structure that was supported by policies, theology, and mainstream media. Boddy-Evans (2021) alludes to a few acts that helped create the apartheid state as outlined below:

> *The Group Areas Act No 41 of 1950, which led to over three million people being relocated through forced removals. The Suppression of Communism Act No 44 of 1950, which was broadly worded [to allow any rebellious] group the risk of being 'banned'. The Bantu Authorities Act No 68 of 1951, which led to the creation of Bantustans; and the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act No 67 of 1952, which, despite its title, led to the rigid application of Pass Laws* (Boddy-Evans, 2021).

These acts set the tone for this study's view of social structures. The study found that both student groups gained consciousness of inequalities when they observed their living conditions versus those in more affluent environments. The inequalities were more pronounced along racial lines in 1976 when students recognised the difference between their schools and those in white communities which were fully equipped. The example in the study is of a Catholic school with a science lab where students could experiment with elements and chemicals that would help them witness the effects of scientific experiments. Black scholars who were limited to the Bantu education system did not have access to such facilities and this experience agitated them to realise the difference between the two social settings. The finding emphasises the Group Areas Act of No. 41 of 1950, as profiled by Boddy-Evans (2021). The act enforced a tangible boundary between Black and white races, impacting both racial groups' educational outcomes.

Delinking the structure of the Bantu education system from Black identity

The study found that the Bantu education system was itself a social structure. This finding corroborates Fleetwood's (2008) definition of social structures, which incorporates elements such as rules, processes and systems. The apartheid government organised and managed the Bantu education system in schools with the aim of enforcing compliance. They achieved this by dispatching white inspectors to the townships to monitor the progress of the Afrikaans project in schools, with a particular emphasis on top-performing students. The apartheid government used these students as a model to advocate for the imposition of the Afrikaans-centred curriculum. According to Thobejane (2013), the Bantu education system was based on the Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953, which was formulated to enforce a sub-standard education model created to perpetuate the subordinate and marginalised

position of the Black racial group, prepare Black students for manual labour and increase the low-income workforce (Christie & Collins, 1982; Phillips, 1999).

Moore (2015) and Anderson (2020) state that the emphasis of Bantu education was on training, not education, to keep Black people in their place as labourers and rid them of aspirations to emulate the white “boss”. The study discusses the impact of Anderson's (2020) analysis on the Black economy later in this section. However, the study found that the adoption of Black Consciousness led the students to recognise the detrimental effects of the Bantu education system thus remedying its intended outcome, as stated by Anderson (2020). Furthermore, the study also found that the introduction of winter schools run by SASO-affiliated teachers at high schools (intermediate social structures) aided in the destruction of the inferiority and disparaging ideology against the group of 1976 (Phillips 1999; Rosnes, 2019; Khumalo, 2022). These classes paved the way for a new ideology, one that solidified the students' positive position in society, giving them confidence to resist the established and legalised structure of apartheid. This finding supports Diseko's (1992) claim that students impacted by Bantu education became aware of the government's plot against them and formed a student organisation (SASM) to unite and strategise against it.

The study therefore, asserts that the SASM and the SASM Action Committee served as the culmination of the students' collective knowledge and experiences, providing a platform for fostering a shared identity among them. The students' decision to join student organisations such as SASM and engage in a protest against the Bantu education system exemplified their determination to make a meaningful impact on the lives of their fellow students and Black South Africans. This finding supports Majeke’s (1994) assertion that the combination of SASM, SASO and Black Consciousness led the students of 1976 to focus their protests on the education system and the political aspects of apartheid. The study asserts that the political aspects alluded to by Majeke (1994) rest in the apartheid policies and aforementioned laws that restricted the Black population’s movement and economic engagement. According to Smith (1998), social structures contain various elements including ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes and demographic groups. It suggests that student bodies like the SASM Action Committee were indeed social structures, set up to counteract the ideology and regressive ambitions of apartheid towards the Black community. This social structure

ensured that students understood that their protest was part of the national struggle for freedom against the oppression of apartheid and that the Bantu education system was only one aspect of the issue. The finding aligns with the assertions made by Walgrave et al (2010) and Klandermans (2014), which suggest that students participated in political activities with the hope of changing their circumstances, while also expressing their views and feelings about the education system and identity they were forced to adopt. On the other hand, this study has shown the impact of the SASM social structure, which prioritised the development of students' identities before their involvement in political activities.

The students' ability to acknowledge and affirm their identity is symbolic of a proximate social structure because it empowered them to pursue their desired objectives actively (Merolla et al, 2012). The finding demonstrates that the pursuit of change or challenging broader social structures, such as the government, becomes more difficult without the establishment of a solid identity. The finding extends Molteno's (1979) view that the youth of 1976 gathered national support and challenged the apartheid system of exploitation and oppression of Black South Africans because it emphasises the role of identity formation in the process of rallying national support.

The social structure of Bantu education had an overarching influence on the post-apartheid South African educational model. The democratic government's attempt to rectify apartheid inconsistencies by merging historically Black and historically White universities in 1999 highlights the contextual background of this view (Jansen, 2003). However, as a result of this merger, additional universities and residential areas were underdeveloped and could not accommodate the influx of students from previously disadvantaged communities (Williams, 2021). The amalgamation of these universities resulted in structural changes, as evidenced by the Fallism movement of 2015–2016.

The students of 2015–2016 resented the colonial model of higher education, which was prevalent in historically white universities, as well as the rising fees associated with their education. They, like the group of 1976, believed that disrupting the intermediate structure of the universities was the only way to address their grievances (Mpofu, 2017). This finding aligns with Fairbanks' (2015) views on the motivations behind the Fallism movement. Like Morreira (2017) and Ahmed (2019), the study found that the students of 2015–2016, like their 1976 predecessors, prioritised their

political activity by developing an identity that celebrated their Blackness. Moreover, the study found that this student group (2015–2016) sought to emulate those who protested before them in 1976. They learned the nature and power of protest from their predecessors who were now in government and able to change policies to favour the Black masses. This finding also positions protest movements as social structures because they are localised networks (Merolla et al, 2012).

Ahmed (2019) defines protests as a network of individuals who establish mental connections with others based on an emotional reaction to a core injustice, leading to collective action. The definition outlines three dimensions of protest participation, namely the recognition of shared identities (i.e. Black Consciousness, Rhodes/Fees Must Fall), the presence of adversaries (i.e. Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, apartheid, colonial education, high fee educational rates) and the action taken to challenge the system and bring about change (i.e. a peaceful march, open dialogues about the state of higher education in South Africa). The integration of Ahmed's (2019) three dimensions into the analysis of protest movements validates his (Ahmed) definition of protests. This study further endorses the perspectives of Larmer (2010), Walgrave et al (2010), Van Laer (2011), Mpofu (2017), and Atkin et al, (2022) which assert that individuals participate in protests within a structured framework to rally support for a cause, forge a group identity, foster political consciousness and express themselves. This is because, both student movements (1976 and 2015–2016) had predetermined frameworks that aimed to eliminate colonial values and fee structures. Both student groups had the goal of eradicating one system and replacing it with a more favourable alternative for Black communities.

Notably, the study found that the Fallists of 2015–2016 were disappointed in the group of 1976, many of whom they assumed were in government but failed to keep their revolutionary promises. The finding suggests that students counted on the government to help them access the economy through education. Since government embodies rules, relations, positions, processes, systems, values and meanings of governance, it is also a social structure (Fleetwood, 2008). The study found that democracy did not alter the social structure of apartheid to accommodate Black people and their economic and structural needs. The finding indicates that the Fallism movement resulted from what Gibson (2011) refers to as the perpetuation of existing power structures and the promotion of a liberation that conforms to colonial frameworks. The

Black majority government in 2015, without completely transforming the policies that governed South Africa before 1994, adopted the same structures of the white minority government that oppressed the youth of 1976.

Social structures have the potential to induce cognitive dissonance

The study found parallels between the youth of 1976 and 2015–2016 in their struggle with cognitive dissonance. In both case studies, two distinct stories sounded similar. In the 1976 study, the participants were weary of imprisonment for maintaining strong political beliefs and found solace and motivation in the prospect of bringing about change in their nation. In the second example, the 2015-2016 Fallists expressed concern that their strong political views isolated them from their families but, at the same time, the prospect of bringing about change in South Africa's higher education system motivated them. The study contends that this duality is a form of cognitive dissonance, as defined by Harmon-Jones and Mills (2019).

However, cognitive dissonance was not only present in the youth's psychological struggles. The findings also demonstrated the perception of history as a political instrument of conscientisation. In the 1976 case, students referred to the study of history from a dual perspective. Their history curriculum taught them to see the world through a white lens while their teacher used history to shape how they should view themselves. The teachers were proactive in reshaping the cognitive structure of their students while also adhering to the approved curriculum to avoid potential repercussions from the governing apartheid authorities. The study found that students identified the impact of history as a key component in the formation of their identity. Although some participants did not receive formal education in history, they received it from their teachers and through conversations with their peers on campus.

The above finding highlights Esterhuizen's (2015) argument that South African history was often viewed through a white lens, with white intellectuals perpetuating white supremacy and disregarding the impact of colonialism and apartheid on Black South Africans. The findings demonstrate the active role of the teachers in challenging this perspective. There is some similarity with students from the 2015–2016 class who were also taught history from a Black Consciousness perspective but, ironically, by their white high school teachers. Although apartheid did not directly oppress these students, their schoolteachers taught them about its role and impact. This finding

highlights Maseremule's (2015) assertion that the students of 2015-2016 sought to restore and assert Black pride in their fellow students by offering them the capacity to think and live by a consistent system of sound principles taught by Black Consciousness.

It is evident that there is a connection between the students' high school experience and their lives at university, specifically in relation to Black Consciousness.

Systematic exclusion of Black people from the economy

The study found that the lasting effect of the Bantu education system was the denial of access to the South African economy. The findings indicate that apartheid South Africa's ideology of "Black people as servants for Europeans" (Majeke, 1994: 93) kept wealth in white communities, as the country's economic structure forced many Black people to earn their livelihood in the service of white people thus relegating members of the Black community to the role of labourers. The study therefore asserts that the students of 2015–2016 were the product of this economic structure of separate development, which Fleetwood (2008) profiles. The finding positions poverty as a systemic outcome of the apartheid social structure, governed by the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 (Boddy-Evans, 2021). It emphasises the enduring impact of the apartheid social system, which used race to determine access to basic services such as education and employment.

This study however found that NSFAS was positioned to address the socio-economic disparities resulting from apartheid structures, with a specific focus on empowering Black students to actively participate in the economy once they graduate. The conclusion is that money was a barrier to entry into the educational system. Students wanted to address the oppression embedded in the existing academic social structures to advocate for those who were unable to pursue their education due to financial constraints. The finding contributes to Mudavanhu's (2017) concept of "othering" in which the superior self is a member of an in-group (wealth, access, privilege) while the inferior other belongs to an out-group (previously disadvantaged or oppressed). This concept reflects Black students' shared experience of pain, leading them to protest against the structures of power that contribute to their pain and suffering. Mokonehatse (2018) also considers the theme of solidarity, noting its spread

through internet-based alternative media. However, this study introduces the concept of solidarity among students who, while not necessarily excluded from the financial model of education, felt compelled to support those who did. They were willing to sacrifice their academic success in order to help others, similar to how the outgoing students of 1976 protested against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of education in solidarity with their younger counterparts. This finding also highlights Masombuka's (2023) assertion that physical blockades used by students in 2015-2016 to prevent others from entering the campus were a form of communication. "The decision to occupy and shut down the [WITS] university made it possible for students to hold captive the brutality of the status quo and to imagine the university of their dreams" (Masombuka, 2023: 47). This form of disruption is consistent in both student groups (1976 and 2015-2016), because they both used their bodies to communicate their dissatisfaction with their respective education systems.

The study demonstrates that the origin of Black Consciousness and the eventual student movement of 1976 and 2015-2016, almost four decades later, developed from discontent with social structures enforced by the apartheid government. The necessity to establish a new identity that converged in conduct and self-perception through the codified concept of Black Consciousness drove the effort to redefine these structures through protest. Moreover, the study asserts that part of democracy's remedial action for apartheid should have been to resupply universities with more accommodation facilities for students in order to improve their overall educational experience. This action would have eliminated the sustained outcome of the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950, which resulted in the long commute from townships to urban areas where most historically white universities are located.

7.2 Contributions of both movements to social norms

Based on the discussion, the study concludes that the 1976 student uprising was the catalyst and inspiration for the 2015-2016 Fallism movement. The study's Fallism participants attributed their courage and resolve to the influence of the 1976 student movement and saw it as a point of reference for their own movement. The findings demonstrate a sense of admiration for the group of 1976 by the Fallists, who see them as pioneers of student activism in South Africa.

This study concludes that Fallism would not have existed without the student movement of 1976. Additionally, the uprising in 1976 would not have occurred without Black Consciousness and the collective efforts to disseminate its ideology and message among the Black population in South Africa. Meredith (2011), quoting Thabo Mbeki, asserts that Africa consistently brings forth new ideas. The study, therefore, draws on the writings of SASO to argue that Africa has made significant contributions to the global market, in terms of not only material resources but also intellectual and philosophical resources. The Fallism movement, sparked by the 1976 precedent, led to a global dialogue on the removal of statues from the imperial era.

The study supports Leshivha's (2019) observation that the impact of the Fallism movement led to the implementation of concrete measures aimed at the removal of imperial symbols (statues) and the initiation of efforts to restore stolen artefacts (from Africa), owing to its widespread appeal on a global scale. This impact was observed in the #BlackLivesMatter movement, as demonstrators in the United Kingdom demolished a statue depicting a British slave trader as part of an anti-racism protest and as Confederate plaques were removed across different parts of the United States of America (Jeffery, 2020; Elliot, 2020).

The similarities drawn between the two protests are the words used to frame their existence. The mainstream media labelled a Black student who was protesting against the government in the 1970s as "militant and impatient" (Biko, 2017:98). Again, the mainstream media used similar words to describe Fallists, labelling them as "wayward students" who were "unwilling to work for financial aid, uneducated, impatient, greedy, entitled, violent, and intransigent" (Linden, 2017: 39).

It seems that the Fallism movement's demand for change, according to ANC Member of Parliament, Mr. Gwede Mantashe, "assisted the ANC to implement its policy decisions" to achieve "free education" for some South Africans (Linden, 2017). Lamer (2010) states that social movements are an expression of the contradictions and hierarchies of the society in which they operate; they express inequalities of resources, influence and education as well as differences in class, gender and ethnicity.

The study has therefore shown that both student groups (of 1976 uprising and the 2015-2016 Fallism movement) took part in the identity-oriented “new social movements theory,” which Ahmed (2019: 67) indicates has three dimensions namely:

(i) **The actors’ acknowledgement of shared identities**

Student leaders in both movements took an active stand against the system and, with the support of others, developed courage to resist its policies.

(ii) **The existence of adversaries**

The 1976 protesters identified Afrikaans and the Bantu education system as antagonists to their academic success and future. On the other hand, the 2015-2016 Fallism movement anchored its resistance on the presence of imperial statues at universities and colonial education as symbols of white supremacy alongside the prevalence of fee-based educational systems as adversaries.

(iii) **Actions that challenge the system forcing it to change**

Both movements ultimately compelled the governing systems to undergo transformation. During the apartheid era, the process of change was characterised by a gradual and violent nature, yet it ultimately manifested as democracy 18 years after the protest. The Rhodes Must Fall movement led to the removal of the Rhodes statue but it is still unclear if education has truly undergone decolonisation since that time. In the case of Fees Must Fall, the outcome was a 0% rise in university fees for the year 2016, leading to the implementation of fee-free education in January 2018 (Linden, 2017). Their predecessors from 1976 acknowledged their efforts, empathising with the students’ hardships and asserting that the realisation of the 1976 promise hinges on the provision of equal education and opportunities for all students (eNCA, 2016).

Both generations risked the honour and acceptance that comes with being "good and well-behaved" students in society, in exchange for coming together to carve an identity of being change agents (Giddens, 2023; Nyamnjoh, 2017).

With their knowledge of Black Consciousness, the students were able to challenge institutional power and make specific claims (Ahmed, 2019). According to this observation, the students achieved social change by resisting traditional identity

development constructs imposed by the state or institutions of power and influence over their self-perception based on the information they received.

According to Van Laer (2011: 54), there are three specific mechanisms that can drive individuals to participate in collective action:

1. **Instrumental reasons**: where feelings of success can boost continuous political participation;
2. **A sense of collective identity**: where group identity becomes rewarding because of close relations with other like-minded people;
3. **Ideological reasons**: where people want to express their views.

The study declares that the issue of identity played a significant role in the emergence of the two movements, which were truly African protests, because they were driven by a collective sense of suffering rather than being influenced by international authority and financial support (Postma, 2010).

The study initially held the view that the absence of SASO's Newsletters and X would have resulted in the ineffectiveness of the student movements. However, the study's findings revealed that these two media platforms merely supplemented the movements rather than assuming a leadership role.

Social movements provide an outlet for people to express their views and establish their identity. Both the literature and the contextual background of this study have demonstrated this, paving the way for further research.

7.3 Chapter conclusion

This chapter presented the results and conclusions of the study. It discussed the role and identity-defining aspects of structures like SRCs and other student political bodies on the life of the youth. Moreover, it provided a comprehensive account of how media influences the formation of one's identity through various means such as artistic expression, music, social events and intellectual discourse through debate clubs. These structures provided students with a secure environment to openly discuss their concerns about their surroundings, while fostering a sense of community and belonging. The chapter further noted that these movements served as a means for

students to express their shared dissatisfaction and their desire to bring about change in both their educational system and society. The impact of collective action in effecting change, emphasising the importance of people who share a belief system or ideology that aligns with the desired outcome, was also explored.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

CONCLUSION

8.1 Recommendations for future research

The study has identified a few gaps that prospective researchers should explore in future studies to enhance the current study's contribution to the existing body of literature. Given that this study relied on the concept of identity development as a driving force for social change and conduct, the researcher suggests further discussions on Black theology in South Africa. Such research can focus on the evolution of the church in South Africa, encompassing different denominations and the distinctive attire worn by each church to convey different levels of hierarchy. It will contribute to the understanding that an ideology requires a theology for its survival and legitimacy. The goal is to align the medium of clothing with the significance it holds in shaping the wearer's identity, while also revealing the origins of the garments and their application as distinguishing factors among congregants.

This study found that visual texts presented through clothing communicate specific meanings. Both student groups (1976 and 2015-2016) used dashiki fabrics to protest and disrupt western culture and embrace their African roots. With regard to the church, various denominations symbolise their faith with specific dress codes. This is perhaps a signal of the church’s role in South African communities carried over into the democratic dispensation. However, this study has not examined the church's role in shaping contemporary identities and the ways different church structures portray membership through different clothing. It has also not explored the relevance of Black theology in today's context or how spiritual conviction contributes to one's identity saliency.

In addition to the concept of Black theology, the researcher recommends further discussions on the evolution of music as media of protest. The findings of the study revealed that music had a significant influence on the participants. That said, this revelation came during the data collection phase of the study, impeding the researcher's ability to investigate this topic further. This study therefore proposes research on the role of music as a soundtrack and source of inspiration for thought

and action within human rights movements, specifically focusing on the United States of America (USA) and South Africa during the 1960s. The study could delve into the relationship between music and the forced expulsion of South African musical liberators like Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela to the USA. It could also attempt to integrate music from both continents and examine its impact on activists' development across generations. The music of the Black Power movement holds significance, as it subsequently influenced the development of hip-hop and the musicians who sparked activism through underlying themes. The study could also explore the function of music genres like *kwaito* in the 1990s as a progression of Makeba and Masekela's musical style to a younger demographic group. Music, as a form of entertainment, provides passive suggestions to its listeners that may or may not have an impact on the consequences of their actions.

Although the Fallists of 2015-2016 contributed to social change in South Africa, many felt a slight disappointment in how the movement ended. There is a need to explore the outcomes of what this movement stood for. While the removal of colonial statues is a significant step, what tangible benefits have resulted from their removal? Is the education system gradually moving towards a decolonial framework? In addition to the declaration of NSFAS being converted to a bursary rather than a student loan for some students, how much of the promise to deliver free education has been fulfilled? What role does the media, both mainstream and alternative, play in communicating these outcomes? Is the media holding the state accountable for these promises? This particular study would help shed light on the bigger picture of Fallism and not only on what it has achieved in 2015-2016. Furthermore, the study would highlight mainstream media's role as the Fourth Estate of the Realm, advocating for the state and its laws.

8.2 Conclusion of the study

8.2.1 Summary of chapters

This study set out to explore the role of media in conscientising the South African youth about social change. It did so by outlining three objectives for achieving its outcomes. The first objective was to investigate the source of consciousness among the youth activists of 1976 and 2015-2016. The goal was to identify the catalyst that contributed to the realisation by the youth groups under study that there was a need for change. This was explored under the assumption that young people do not spontaneously

inspire protests but rather seek a guiding principle to identify the necessary areas for change.

The second objective was to find out how media played a role in conscientising and developing the identities of the student movement's participants. The study expanded the scope of media to include alternative media channels such as internet-based social media, visual texts, music and newsletters as contributors to the participants' identity. The objective also sought to distinguish the role of mainstream media from alternative media in developing identity saliency. The study revealed that mainstream media tends to report and present events from the perspective of news values and/or a protest paradigm, often sensationalising and reporting on the negative aspects of protest movements. In contrast, alternative media remain unregulated which enables them to offer an unbiased viewpoint or advocate a protest movement.

The third objective was to determine the relationship between protest movements and identity development within South Africa's social structures. The study defined various social structures in South Africa, starting with the foundation of apartheid policies and laws that regulated the state and its operations. The study found that apartheid laws have in fact contributed to the outcome of specific social structures such as educational institutions, Black communities' economic development and the socio-demographic aspects of living conditions. In addition, the development of a strong identity helped protesters to challenge existing social structures and demand change in their living conditions, regardless of their youth.

The study was divided into seven chapters which included sections on literature, the historical context of South Africa, methodology, two chapters on data presentation and analysis and, finally, the discussion of the study's findings.

The literature review explored a conceptual framework of social structures, identity, Black Consciousness, media and cognitive dissonance. These concepts are fundamental to this study and shape its interpretation. Moreover, the literature examined protest movements and media coverage of these events, specifically highlighting the promotion of a democratic government while downplaying the adverse aspects of democracy that the protests exposed.

The chapter on context examined South Africa's history with particular emphasis on Afrikaner history and the expansion of separate development, also known as

apartheid. The chapter described the formation of the South African Union as a peace treaty between the Afrikaners and the British after the South African War. The discussion then shifted to the Afrikaners' adoption of a religious Calvinist ideology which solidified their belief in pre-destined ownership and control of South Africa. This theology paved the way for media ownership, which disseminated news about Afrikaner dominance and apartheid policies, with a Calvinist slant. Further, the study revealed that the Afrikaner press served as a propaganda tool, controlling the narrative about the apartheid state to its citizens and international audiences. The chapter also looked into the creation of apartheid laws including the Bantu Education Act, which brought about Bantu education in both the basic and higher education levels of learning. The chapter presented the advent of Black Consciousness, which paved the way for the 1976 march, ultimately leading to the end of apartheid and the emergence of Fallism.

The methodology chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research paradigm and key attributes of qualitative research. The study used two methods for gathering data—semi-structured interviews with 24 participants and qualitative content analysis of 17 SASO Newsletters and 64 X feeds pertaining to the Rhodes and the Fees Must Fall movement. The subsequent samples were printed and analysed separately. The data was analysed using a thematic analysis method, which involved creating codes and themes to process the data.

Chapter 5 presents the 1976 research findings, summarised into three themes that speak to the research objectives. The chapter explored the formation of social engagements amongst scholars and the influence of teachers as contributors of the youth’s pro-Black identity. This includes student organisations such as SASM and SRC. It then probed the role of the media, breaking it down to concepts such as oral communication, visual texts, the church and literary works including books. This chapter also explored the role of SASO Newsletters in the development of the youth’s identity and how factors like language, opinions about Black culture and the formation of an antagonist in the newsletters’ texts contributed to the identity of the students. Lastly, the chapter examined the connection between social protests, identity, apartheid social structures, Bantu education, history and the dismantling of apartheid social structures to re-establish order in their living environments. The chapter found that students were acting from a position of understanding and solidarity with one

another. They understood the role that Bantu education played in their future, relegating them to the role of servants and thus sought to circumvent this power by protesting against it.

Chapter 6 presents the findings from the 2015-2016 Rhodes and Fees Must Fall movements. As in Chapter 5, this section examined similar findings through three themes that are in line with the study's objectives. The chapter commenced with a comprehensive analysis of the two student movements that emerged in 2015-2016. The chapter discusses the sources of conscientisation, the role of media in developing the students' identities and the link between social protests, identity and social structures. Several similarities were observed in the feedback received from the group of 1976 and the youth of 2015-2016. The chapter delineates the function of X in characterising the Fallism movement and illustrates how these discussions fostered a cohesive identity throughout South Africa, as the students' ability to connect transcended geographical boundaries. Feedback and engagement on what each movement (RMF/FMF) meant were rapid and open for public discussion on X. However, the most notable aspect of Chapter 6 is its revelation of the widespread existence of apartheid systems in 2015-2016, which affected the lives of students who were born after the apartheid rule.

The discussion chapter (7) synthesises and analyses the findings derived from chapters 5 and 6. The study integrates these findings with a comprehensive examination of existing literature to explain the concepts that emerged from the research. Noteworthy were the similarities including the observation that student organisations conscientised students to Black Consciousness. Both groups were either linked to or affiliated with Student Representative Councils and both groups were conscientised through debates and plenary sessions which took place in libraries, classrooms or school halls. These settings provided students with a sense of belonging and a collective identity with their peers. Other findings include mainstream media's duality in being friend and foe of student movements. The study presented this finding by examining the functions of mainstream media and their portrayal of students in their publications and found that the terms used for both groups of students suggest a sustained heuristic regarding student protests in South Africa.

8.2.2 Concluding thoughts

This study integrates the disciplines of media studies, social movements, psychology and political studies. It achieves this by exploring the influence of media on the youth, the cognitive process of identity development and the growth of political awareness within the framework of personal identity which stems from the recognition of social structures that limit and/or develop a person's view of life. It also challenges media users to interrogate media messages by scrutinising the frames from which they are being presented. By doing this, media users gain the ability to question the information they receive, thereby avoiding falling prey to propaganda.

The findings of the study oppose the sustained belief that apartheid fell with the establishment of democracy in South Africa. The concept of apartheid was eradicated but the system and operation of the regime and social structure remained intact. The study suggests that in the absence of a thorough examination and appropriate treatment of the underlying principles of apartheid, South Africa could potentially face a future student uprising. This uprising would merge the two movements in this study, giving rise to a new social issue that could be attributed to the role of the apartheid state.

This study differs from those of the scholars cited in this discussion which explored the role of Black Consciousness and its influence on the youth of South Africa within the respective context of each movement's year. The cited scholars did not merge the experience of the students with the content of the movement's media. Furthermore, while the other scholars cited in this study highlighted the impact of apartheid on the movements, they did not delve into its historical background or the ways in which Afrikaners, as products of a protest from the British Cape colony, shaped their own identities. As a result, this study stands out in terms of protest movements, identity development, media formation (the Afrikaner press, SASO Newsletters and the liberal use of X) and the relationship between these elements and existing social structures. The research objectives guided the exploration of all three groups and achieved a satisfactory outcome.

The study has shown that, after four decades, the media still plays a role in identity development and protest activity. It also presents the media as any medium that fosters change in an individual's thoughts and identity. For the participants of this study,

media comprised of music, books, social clubs, *et cetera*. However, this concept can be explored further in future studies to identify what influences the thoughts and identities of the youth of today.

It is the researcher's view that future critical thought on political awareness can feature the findings of this study, discussing, for example, themes of what Black Consciousness means to a left – or right-wing Black politician. The saliency of Black Consciousness in the youth of today is yet to be explored in terms of the media content presented to them and how it defines their identity as Black individuals. This too could be examined at a later stage. Reading about Black Consciousness has shifted the perspective of the researcher on concepts such as geopolitics, the economy and social backgrounds. The realisation that the world and its systems were initially designed for a white audience has helped the researcher gain a clearer understanding of how the world functions.

It is the view of the study that South Africa’s educational system requires the content of this study to assist young people to identify solutions that align with their historical, political and social identities. This outlook can also help address the question of what Black Consciousness means to individuals pursuing politics to improve the lives of Black South Africans. Regardless of the politician's stance on change, this Black Consciousness approach will lead to the eradication of the social structures that colonial and apartheid policies fostered and established.

The marriage of these two student movements, from the perspective of their participants, also allowed the study to explore the historical context of the youth of 1976, engaging their convictions and aspirations for a post-apartheid future. It also provided the researcher with access to their current views on student movements in South Africa. These participants, who now possess a comprehensive understanding of student movements, shared their perspectives on Fallism, its impact on South Africa and its current policies, contrasting them with the change they aimed to bring about in 1976. The researcher believes that more discussions on this comprehensive perspective can serve as a guiding principle, not only for young people to learn from but also for the developers of the governing structures that run the country to gain insight from.

This is what sets this study apart from other scholars. It presents the first-hand experiences of the participants who openly discussed their identity development and the cognitive dissonance they experienced when actively shaping their environments for social change and reformation, despite social pressure to conform to existing policies. The study reveals that developing a new identity for an activist is not an easy process because it entails sacrificing one's social standing in exchange for social justice that benefits the collective and not the individual. The study therefore defines social activists as social martyrs, fortified by the comfort of embodying a shared identity with like-minded individuals.

Although the Fallists in this study did not participate in the 1976 uprising, they shared the benefit of learning from their predecessors as well as their admiration that these youths were younger and challenged the apartheid system with greater clarity and understanding of what it means to be an activist. Their criticism of the group of 1976 stems from their perceived inability to alter apartheid policies for the benefit of youth. The study proposes a more comprehensive academic discourse on this perspective, scrutinising the perceived views and outcomes of each movement as experienced by those involved. This academic dialogue would help bridge the gap between the two movements and provide future activists with a comprehensive view of what it means to be a student activist in South Africa.

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