

**The Demise of Student Movement in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa:  
a case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal**

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requirements of the degree of Master of Social Policy  
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BY

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## **Dedication**

To my late mother Queeneth S. Nhlapo, your teachings taught me to give my best to all , respect humanity and fear God. Your teachings remained with me and shaped me to be what I am today. To my late father, Fanie M. Nhlapo, I would not be here if it were not for your hardwork in bringing us up. I am grateful for everything that you have done for me. To my late brother Vusumuzi Prince Nhlapo and to my late sister Busisiwe Emily Nhlapo, I hoped I lived your dreams and I did my utmost best to ascend the academic heights, which you were ascending in your lifetime. I miss you.

### **Abstract**

The failure of student movements in higher education institutions in South Africa to critically engage the nature and the character of the 'democratic' transition in higher education has led to the questioning of the nature of student activism, activists and the academics of the new order. The substantive nature of our democracy which has no guarantees for transformative higher education system has since led to the adoption of neo-liberal policies that have perpetually excluded a certain sector of South African society. This oppression has been legitimised by failure of student movement and academics to uproot the current regimes of policy making which continue to hold captive the minds of a mass of people in a state of false consciousness.

The current circumstances of "corporatised" higher education system makes it necessary now more than ever to begin to examine the issues of relativism as it relates to the **questioning** of current state of these institutions and student movements. South Africa needs student activist/intellectuals who are willing to participate in the auspices of the institution and the structure, and to transform it. Their task is to operate within time. However, the post 1994 era has left the student movement disgruntled and without direction. Student movements and their academic counter part have since been absorbed by the dominant ideology of the ruling elite. This has made transformation extremely difficult because of the materialism that this brings and a failure to engage the discourses of oppression with the goal of exploiting and deconstructing the dominant ideologies of subjection, betraying the scrutinizing role of a liberating education. This thesis seeks to argue that student movements, academics and academics have been defeated in an area where they should excel in the battle and struggle of ideas, for alternatives in search of a better society.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*“Historically student movements have played a significant role in the late 20th Century history of the world. The Anti-War Movement in the USA between 1968 and 1973 was instrumental in bringing American imperialism to its senses with regard to the savage war conducted by the Americans against the people of Vietnam. The Anti-Nuclear Movement in the 1970s played a key role in reminding the world of the senselessness of the Nuclear Arms Race. Young people belonging to the Green Peace Organisation are currently vigorously contesting Nuclear Testing by France in the Pacific. Many of the members of these organisations that constantly remind us of our social responsibility are almost invariably students and the youth”. [Molefe, 1995<sup>1</sup>]*

### 1.1

Similarly, in South Africa the student movement has had a colossal contribution to both the liberation struggle as well in the shaping of discussions and policy in the democratic dispensation. In the apartheid era the student movement operated when there was a political vacuum<sup>2</sup> and thus provided the space for mass mobilisation, which was in the main composed of the student body and the progressive working class. For instance in the 1960s South African Student Organisation (SASO) took on the challenge of re-kindling internal radical political opposition to apartheid, and spearheaded such opposition. In the 1970s such incidences as the Soweto uprising in 1976 highlights the key role of students in the shaping of socio-political discourse of South Africa. As a result, the immediate post-Soweto conjuncture and political terrain changed to be very different in nature, characterised as it was by the existence of a number of national, regional and local antiapartheid formations, by intense debates among activists around resistance ideology, politics, strategy and tactics, and the beginning of a bifurcation in radical opposition politics into Black Consciousness (BC) and Congress movement camps.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Role of the Student movement in the Transformation Process of the Northwest Province.*

<sup>2</sup> During the apartheid regime all political organisation that were opposed to the ruling party were banned and no political activities were allowed to take place legally.

In the 1980s student organisations such as Congress of South African Students (COSAS), Azanian Student Organisation (AZASO), Azanian Student Congress (AZASCO), and South African National Student Congress (SANSCO) were seen in the forefront of the numerous boycott campaigns and some participated in the formation and activities of the United Democratic Front (UDF). The South African Student Congress (SASCO); South African Democratic Student Movement (SADESMO); South African Liberal Student Association (SALSA), Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania (PASMA) and other student formations played a very important role in the 1990s.

In South Africa there is a need to establish a common understanding in the contextualization of the role and purpose of higher education and its impact on the society in general. More importantly is a context in which student activists locate their participation in the broader transformation process taking place in South Africa with particular focus on the merger processes at UKZN in the context of higher education institutions. This part of the thesis seeks to locate the role of activist in the merger process. The general contextualization is to regard the role and purpose of education as one that should be assessed in terms of its relation to the political economy and ideological hegemony of the ruling elite, development, teaching learning and research. Though the role and purpose cannot only be restricted nor influenced by the above facts alone, political economy remains dominant if the role and purpose of education is to be asserted.

Political economy briefly refers to the way in which both economic and human resources are produced and also distributed in the society. Therefore educational institutions such as Universities have an explicit role of educating intellectuals within a particular context who will offer their know how in the political, social, cultural and economic structure of the society. The knowledge and skills are utilized to maintain, defend, and develop and to change the status quo. However, it is important to note that institutions of learning can at some stage, be used by the oppressing classes and strata to popularize their views. Learning institutions are therefore not above class struggles, but remain an integral part of ideological contestation.

It is therefore imperative to acknowledge those relations between institutions of learning and ideology which reflect the nature and the level of class contradictions in society. The history of education struggles in South Africa serves as a testimony to the class contestations. Apartheid has systematically applied racist and unpopular policies in the education system. As it is now known, access to education and in the past allocation of resources was based on the empowerment of minority (white) population at the expense of the black majority. Learning institutions were demarcated along racial lines: Historically Black Institutions (HBI's) and Historically White Institutions (HWI's). HWI's had access to massive resources to maintain their 'exclusive privileges'. Allocations of resources were heavily concentrated in HWI's primary because its purpose was to produce a white (resourced) domination in society. With institutional transformation unfolding at a high pace, Mantzaris and Cebekhulu (2005) argue that the skewed allocation of resources will never last forever.

This above scenario remains (although institutions have merged and whilst others are still in the process of merger. This thesis seeks to acknowledge that the transformation process noble intentions is to try and equalize resource, avoid duplication of structures however seek to preserve central pillars of the previous order thereby ensuring that entrenched power holders – especially the bourgeoisie (HWI in this regard) – maintain a veto over the pace, content and institutional form of the new democracy (in this regard post merger era) whilst this been done, the merger process seeks to demolish the institutional civil society especially the student / worker activism in HBI. In this context 'demobilization' refers to attempts by the state to instill in the working class (Student Activist), or other independent organs (Academics) of civil society, an understanding of 'proper behavior' in the new society (merged institutions), ... in addition demobilization entails persuading the masses to participate in politics in the 'correct' way which is by voting every year for legislature (SRC, and CO-OPERATIVE STUDENT GOVERNANCE), avoiding popular politics.

## **1.2 Background to education transformation in South Africa**

In the post-Sharpville era the liberal National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) was one of the few remaining vehicles for multiracial political activity. Its following was concentrated in the four English medium universities of Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Durban (Natal University) and Rhodes, the first three of which accepted Black students (after 1959 only with ministerial permission). The effort of student's representative councils at the African segregated universities of Turfloop, Ngoye, and Forthare to affiliate to Nusas was one of the issues over which African students clashed with the respective university authorities between 1960 and 1967. Nevertheless, by 1967, many black students were disenchanted with Nusas's leadership (Lodge: 1983). There were several reasons for this. First, white student leaders had become less political and more concerned with the preservation of academic freedom, which most blacks students did not enjoy.

Secondly, the number of African students on segregated campuses had quadrupled since 1960. These represented the majority of African students and Nusas predominantly white leadership was unable to reflect particular concerns. Even if they had been sensitive to the needs of this constituency their organization was in any case prohibited from operating on African campuses in 1967. Finally, there were ideological stimuli which helped to distance black students from whites, especially the American decisive Black Theology which influenced the University Christian Movement, from its inception in 1967. It had gained a significant following on segregated campuses. The incident in 1967 served to underline for black Nusas members the futility of participation in white liberal institutions. "At a Nusas's annual conference at Rhodes the university authority insisted that African delegates should use (segregated social facilities). During the following year, black students became involved in Nusas and in the University Christian Movement and began to discuss the establishment of an all black movement. The result was that the South African Student Organization (SASO) held its inaugural conference at Turfloop in July 1969 (Lodge, 1983).

From its foundation SASO perceived its purpose to be an agent in the process of 'conscientisation' within the black communities. Its leaders, like their intellectual fore runners the (Africanist), argued that the immediate problem in organizing black resistance was psychological. Before one would consider the difficulties of organization and strategy the inferiority complexes engendered by oppression and paternalism had to be overcome.

Of note in the 70's was the sharp rise in the gold price, and South Africa was grossly affected, thereby leading to a six fold increase in its prices in 1973 and December 1974 which contributed to the climate of economic uncertainty. In August 1975, the United States began to sell off its reserves on private market, and which resulted in economic recession in South Africa.

Lodge argues that as growth rates slacked to a point of actual decline in 1976 the climate of insecurity was accentuated by external political development. With the massive rise in the oil price in 1973 the relative importance of African oil producers as trading partners to the Western industrial countries grew and South Africa's correspondingly diminished. More immediately alarming, South Africa's community from guerilla attacks was substantially reduced with the collapse in 1974 of Portuguese authority in Angola and Mozambique. Internally South Africa was faced with 'explosion of labor unrest in Durban in the first month of 1973, 160 strikes involving 61 000 workers took place, these have been concentrated in Durban but spread to East London and the Rand later (Lodge, 1983).

Having sketched the main features which form the background of student activism – that is economic recession, a more political assertive aspirant African petty bourgeoisie, and the consecutive wave of labor unrest – we can turn to the 1976 student's revolt itself. The critical spark to what was to develop into a virtual communal insurrection was provided by 'police over-reaction to a street procession of secondary school pupils on their way to Orlando stadium to protest against the recent insistence by educational authorities that arithmetic and social studies be taught in Afrikaans'. The demonstration

was preceded by strikes and attack on police and teachers at several junior secondary schools in Soweto.

On June 13 1976, at a meeting of South African Student Movement (SASM) convened at Naledi High School, a Soweto Student's Representative Council (SSRC) was formed, composed of SASM delegates, two from each Soweto secondary School. It was this body, under the chairmanship of Tebello Motopyane, which planned the fateful demonstration for 16 June in 1976. On that day 15 000 children converged on Orlando West Junior Secondary School, only to be confronted by a hastily summoned and aggressive police detachment which, when tear gas had failed to disperse the students, fired into a crowd killing two and injuring several more. By midday rioting had broken out in several parts of Soweto, cars were stoned and barricades created and attacks took place on administration buildings and beer halls, two white men were attacked and killed. During the next few days the revolt spread nationally and to universities (1) Wits (briefly), Turfloop, Ngoye and Natal (Lodge, 1983).

Schools were closed by Minister for Bantu Education on the 18<sup>th</sup>. In the interval before the formal re-opening of schools on the 26<sup>th</sup> the Afrikaans teaching medium ruling was dropped by the authorities, the first ANC leaflets in response to the riots appeared (calling on pupils to broaden the concerns and the constituency of the revolt), and an older generation of community leaders formed the Black Parents Association (BPA) (Lodge,1983).

The 1976 revolt contributed to the influence on popular political perception and the re-emergence of open political discussion within the African Community. Here the commercial press has played an important role in 1980, example, the Soweto, daily newspaper, Time Post, ran a 'Release Mandela petition form in its columns for several months as well as helping to popularize the Freedom Charter (Lodge, 1983). The Charter was taken up by several organizations including a new student association formed in 1979, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). COSAS continued its mandate throughout the eighties and rendered South Africa ungovernable. AZASO played a significant role too. NUSAS and SASO merged to form SASCO in 1991 in Rhodes

University and had significant victories the political landscape and the road to Freedom and democracy in South Africa.

The current mergers of educational institutions in South Africa are a brainchild of the first democratically elected government of our country. Mergers, rationalization, cost-efficiency, and outsourcing have become the key and fundamental terms defining the 'transformation' of the universities in post-apartheid South Africa (Van der Walt, 2003:9). It is understood then that the orientation and structures of the institutions in the process of their development, would take new directions and forms, in relative material and intellectual autonomy-though never in isolation-from global forms of education (Crossman 2004). Hence there is no middle road; the choice faced by higher education planners is one that either prioritizes or pays homage to an abstract market economy or one that speaks to the needs of flesh and blood people (Vally, 2000: 72).

The merger process meant drastic changes for tertiary institutions, of note it meant a reduction from 36 to 21 institutions in South Africa. For the purposes of this research the focus will be on the merger of University of Natal with the University of Durban Westville. The merger plan was a government initiative made "public by the then Minister of Education Kader Asmal" and a national working groups was initiated to also looked on issues like 'access equity, regional collaboration and rationalization of programs' (The Star 2002).

The proposed merger (then) 'sparked a racial rumpus, with Black Vice Chancellors saying the government is leading their historically under funded institutions to a final collapse'. Drawing from the transitional theory it can be argued that the Vice Chancellor's of HBI's do (did) not voluntary surrender their power ... do not willingly renounce control. However the sad truth about this was that because of apartheid the historically black institutions did not have financial backing. According to report compiled by National Working group suggested that 'most of historically black institutions and technikons be closed or merged while the majority of white institutions based on their financial and academic strength, be retained' (Sunday Independent, 2002).

The noble objective of the government was to achieve equity in higher education landscape shaped and scarred by apartheid (Sunday Independent). Whilst that is acknowledge the merger was a total take over of historically black institutions because they lacked financial resources and human capacity to undertake the restructuring needed to bring them in line with the merger plan of the government.

The merger process had similar bearings at Durban Westville and University of Natal. Just as existing power holders are incapable of suppressing, or eliminating, their opponents. In this sense, therefore, the contending parties reach a stalemate that can either escalate into level of chaos that neither side wants, or be solve through negotiations between the parties for a new order acceptable to each other.

A scientifically-based historical analysis of the dynamics of the country's education will inform that it will take the new University of KwaZulu-Natal which came into existence on 1 January 2004 more than a few years to get rid of the worm-eaten roots of the structure whose ideas are inherited from the Verwoed's thinking. The first few years will be understandably marked by the struggle for survival which will entail taking one step forward while in the meantime taking one step back. Mamdani's (2003) in Cebekhulu and Mantzaris (2004) hypothesis that those institutions which survive the first five years are likely to have more than even chance of surviving into a ripe old age is very relevant to today's mergers. Nyerere (cited in Eze 1998) emphasised the relevance of time when he said "*nothing has a perfect beginning; time is required for anything to be perfect*". Mkandawire (1996) in Cebekhulu and Mantzaris (2004) analyses the condition of universities by her phrase that universities are "born in chains". Her analysis is adopted from the social contract theory of Jean Jacques Rousseau<sup>3</sup>. The thoughts that follow are by no means exhaustive but merely highlight certain very central and pertinent issues related to the UKZN merger.

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<sup>3</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau is a famous French philosopher, whose famous statement that man is born free yet he is always in chains, and he cannot furnish the answer, the answer is the social contract theory is very relevant to today's livelihoods.

Evidently as a highlight not focus of the study, the University of Natal seek as according to Ginsburg 1996 to prove their organizational capacity and seek popular support in the pre-merger phase (Confrontation). The University of Natal ignored its own legal advice and pressed ahead to appoint a new Vice Chancellor before its merger with the university of Durban Westville (UDW). A report issued by the Mail & Guardian 05.04.02 reveals that senior academics at the university are dismayed that council is persisting the selection process and express concern at the damage this can cause to the merger. UDW did not take this lightly. The 'cold war' that followed the appointment of Prof Malegapuru Makgoba and Dr Sath Cooper led to a near stalemate situation, which could be resolved by negotiations. Gingsburg (1996) argues that these became 'a series of pacts negotiated by Elites representing the various protagonists' 96, 74. Academics, Council and student leadership was part of the 'elite' who took part in the negotiations at various levels. Firstly, negotiations cannot be conducted by the masses themselves, at the venues other than the bargaining table, but must be entered into on their behalf by a leadership (elite) that ostensibly speaks for them (Gingsburg, 1996: 4).

Series of talks between management and student leadership of both institutions took place. On student systems (Financial Aid, Admin & Student Support) there was consensus on every issue. Also there were series of talks with regard to student governance policies which culminated with the signing of a record of understanding at Umhlanga known as Umhlanga Resolutions in September 2003.

At student leadership level the merger can be seen as an Endeavour to create a homogenous student society considering the role external and internal factors. At student political participation (SASCO, SADESMO, ANCYL and MPT) from all campuses would make it possible to achieve an open, autonomous student society without violence.

An obstruction to maintain status quo was minimal at student governance level because of the penetration of the Student Governance Officer in both campuses. This was done whilst the dirty verbal confrontation and mud slinging between Dr Cooper and Prof Makgoba in the media. Government externally imposed the merger, students and activists

had to socially readjust so the new era imposed on them. Paulo Freire argues that times of transition involve a rapid movement in search of new themes. This was evident at Umhlanga as student's leadership grappled with issues that affected them and tried to put interim guidelines to help them through the merger process.

However, the student body at Westville campus was evidently divided. An endeavor to create a homogenous open student body at Westville campus was a huge challenge. As other 'reactionary', forces sought at all costs to obstruct any advance (towards the merger) and to maintain the status quo or worse still, do bring about a retreat (The then SRC President and cabal). While it was impossible to return the emerging masses (student) body who mandated them to represent them) to their previous state of affairs, which lead to immobility and silence in the name of their own 'Freedom' (new era) (Freire, 1996:10).

This led to the division of the student body into two general categories – reactionaries and progressive that was in the process of transition and those that were not only in but of transition. The deepening of the clash between the old or the other, and the emotional climate of the time encouraged the tendency to become radical about that choice. Radicalisation involves increased commitment to the position one has chosen ... The man who has, made a radical option does not deny another man's right to choose, or does he try to impose his choice (Freire, 1996:10). Like in the case of Socialist Student Movement which felt the obligation to share light that the merger process will bring about commercialization of higher education. This structure was radical which did not imply self-flagellation.

Unfortunately, the Westville campus, elite and masses (student body) alike, were unprepared to evaluate the transition critically; and so tossed by the force of contending contradictions, they began to fall into sectarian positions instead of opting for radical solutions. Sectarianism is predominantly emotional and uncritical. It is arrogant antidialogical and thus anticomunicative. Sectarians disrespect the choices of others and try to impose their own choice. So it was with the cabal led by the SRC President

which tried to impose its choices to the student body. The inclination which maneuvered this sect was: action without the vigilance of reflection; which had a taste of sloganeering, which generally remained at the level of myth and half truths and attributed “absolute value to the purely relative ... the radical in contrast rejects... and submit his action to reflection.”

### **1.2.1 Demobilisation of Student Movement**

Whilst the radicals do not consider themselves as the proprietor of history, and while they recognize that it is impossible to stop or anticipate history without penalty, he is no mere spectator of the historical process. According to Freire (1996), in Education the Practice for freedom must be reflected by radicals who must participate constructively in that process by discerning transformation in order to aid and accelerate it.

As the generation of the old student leadership joined the ranks of the working class, new student leadership emerged with different interests. The student leadership at Westville campus collaborated with the powers that be and the leadership were given ‘accessories’. This was irresponsible as it led to the student leadership remained uncritical, and further not prepared for the transformation process. Responsibility cannot be acquired intellectually but through experience. Assitenelism offers no responsibility, no opportunity to make decisions, but only gestures and attitudes which encourages passivity (Freire, P). Furthermore, this led the radical potential of the student movement to be driven towards a reformist approach seeking accommodation with moderates as Gingsburg 96 puts it (Transition Theory), while there was time to pre-empt a thoroughgoing participatory alternative. This weakened the student position, which helped in the creation of a democratic order in South Africa.

In this event, the lack of foresight opened a loophole for demobilization. In this context demobilization refers to attempts by the academic technocrats to instill in the student movement, or other organ of the university society, an “understanding of ‘proper namely compliance with the need for stability’ within the framework of the merger process. In addition, demobilization entails persuading the masses to participate in (student) politics

in the 'correct' way (Gingsburg) and reducing the student radicalism to SRC politics and elections.

What was needed on the transition was to engage the students and encourage them to enter the historical process critically. The prerequisite for this task was a form of education enabling the student to reflect themselves, their responsibilities and their role in the new cultural climate 'indeed to reflect on their very power of reflection' to be critical which has been replaced nationally by apathy since 1994 (Demobilised Students Youth a revolutionary organ of civil society).

### **1.2.2 Student Challenges**

Students at institutions of higher learning are facing serious threats with the recently unveiled plan by the government to curb what they referred to as 'unsustainable' growth in student numbers (Stephen 2004). Ahmed Essop, the chief director of higher education planning in his parliamentary statement lashed out at institutions who are enrolling students in areas such as humanities rather than science or business because the government does not consider them as a priority. Such a statement should have sparked debate among student leadership, but the silence is deafening. The possibility of robust debate on this issue was nullified by the fact that the days of student activism have died a slow and painful death at a very critical juncture of the country's intellectual and academic history.

According to Cebekhulu and Mantzaris thesis on "**Stop beating about the bush: UKZN merger a tragic mishap**", students are now left at the mercy of Senate senior bureaucrats and academics and university staffing committees whose job is to rubberstamp without interrogating the future implications of such policies. With the increased new point system at UKZN, students from disadvantaged background are facing a serious challenge of being turned back. The following case study serves as an example: *A potential new student from Vukuzakhe High School at Umlazi Township with 35 points wishing to do a degree in Commerce majoring in accounting was told that he cannot be accepted because he did not have 36 points. Instead he was advised to do a*

*one year bridging course. This despite the fact that he has passed Mathematics with a B and Accounting with a C in higher grade<sup>4</sup> (Cebekhulu and Mantzaris 2005). The access principle has been severely compromised at UKZN by educational gates with a huge sign that says Private Property, No. 13, Keep Out. Access has been impeded. Thus entrance requirements have been unilaterally increased e.g. BA entrance has increased from 24 to 32 points. This automatically disadvantages Black students and African students in particular.*

### **1.2.3 Challenges facing UKZN**

The corporatisation of management (the adoption of business models of organization and administration of universities), especially when strategic decision making positions are still occupied by white conservative bureaucrats, makes one wonder whether the much talked about transformation will ever take place. This despite the much talked about ‘massification’ propagated by the then Minister of Education Kader Asmal when the mergers were forced upon HBUs. UKZN can no longer persist on providing superannuation to a whole cadre of White retirees. This is not transformation but retrogression. Having an African Vice-Chancellor and few Africans in management positions does not mean that transformation has taken place until the cultures and the racial histories of the former universities are fundamentally revolutionized. Fanon (1963) argues that in some instance you will be surprised to find out that the very same Blacks are whiter than the Whites<sup>5</sup>, in their approach towards change and transformation.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

The **main aim** of this research is to highlight the lack of radical critique and dialectical inclination of student movement in South Africa. The study uses the University of

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<sup>4</sup> A township student with such a high percentage deserves access if transformation is on the UKZN agenda.

<sup>5</sup> When Blacks speak English with a Victorian accent, one wonders whether the future of our younger generation in Universities is in the right direction.

KwaZulu-Natal's pre and post merger era student political activities as a case study to illustrate this.

**The objectives of the study are as follows:**

- To illuminate the role of student movement in the former HBI (Historically Black Institutions); and
- To caution about the streamlining of thought based on a failure to deconstruction of the current regimes of policy making and other broader transitional education issues.

### **1.4 Hypothesis**

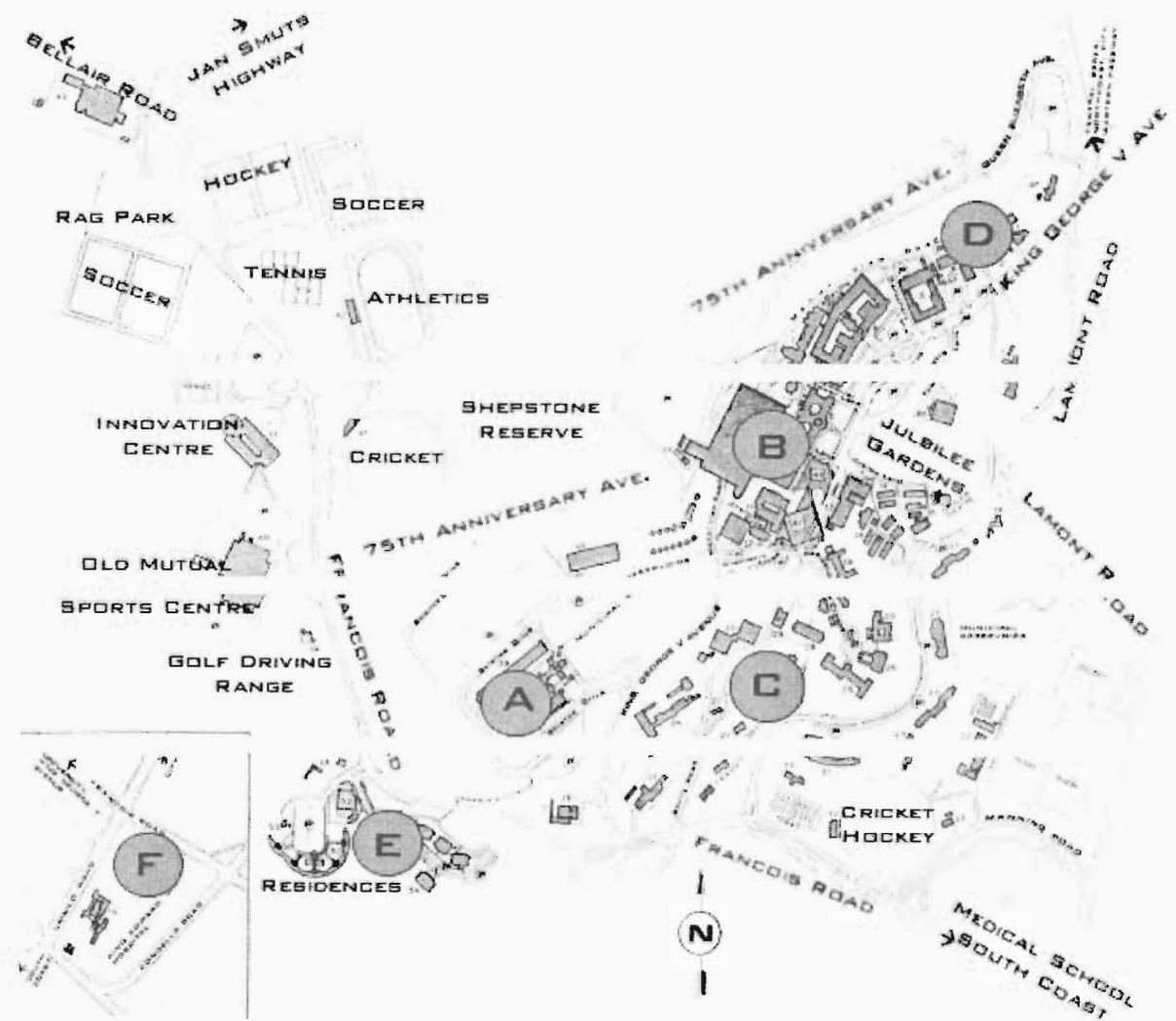
**Intellectuals from the student movement argue that apathy and mass demobilisation depoliticises student leadership.** Is the current student leadership critical of the merger process and its moral and political implication in UKZN?

- Student leadership and UKZN as a centre of knowledge production and reproduction have become breeding grounds for cronies of the ruling party.

- **The implication of the above hypothesis:**

The above noted situation at UKZN defeats the role of education in the transformation of South Africa

### 1.5 Geographical location of Study Area



Map 1

#### Howard College Map:

A- Science Buildings

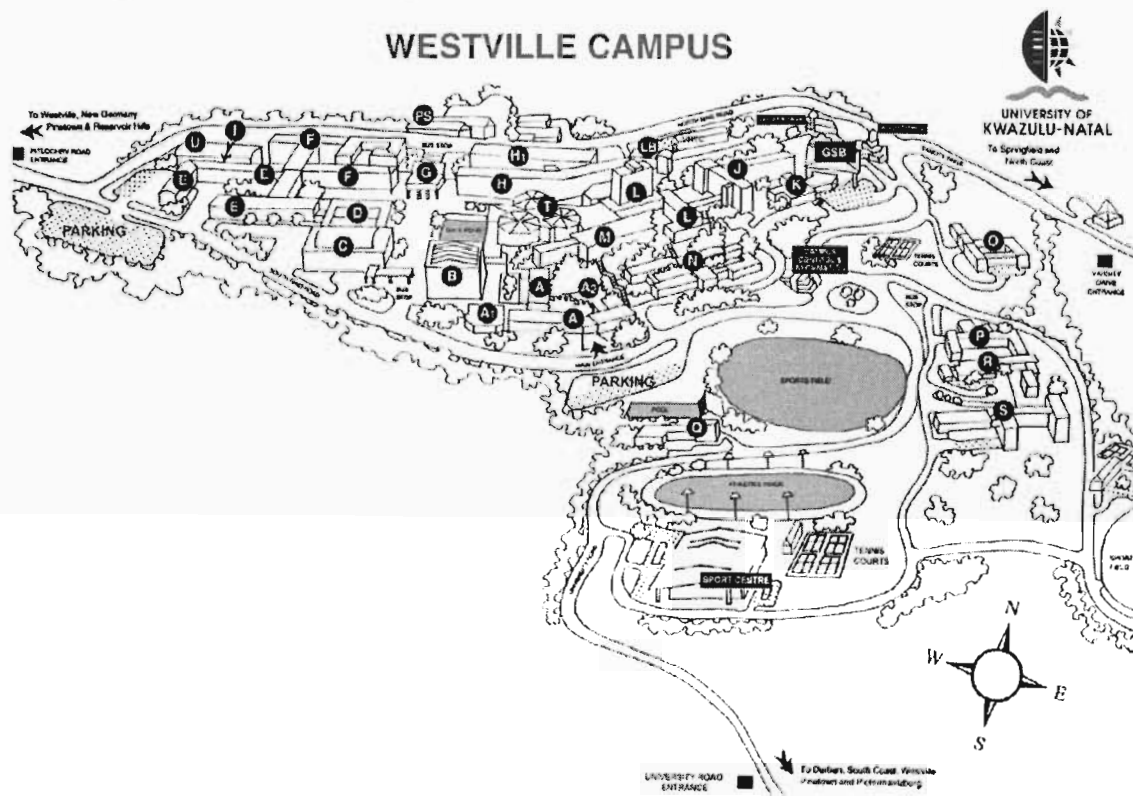
B-Denis Shepstone and other buildings

C-Residences and other buildings

D-Administration Buildings

E-Residences

F - Driving towards the University



Map 2

<b>A</b>	<b>Administration</b>		
<b>A1</b>	<b>Joosub Senate Chamber</b>		
<b>A2</b>	<b>Council Chamber</b>		
<b>B</b>	<b>Library</b>		
<b>C</b>	<b>MH Joosub Hall (Main Hall)</b>		
<b>D</b>	<b>Lockhat Building/Cafeteria</b>		
<b>E/F</b>	<b>Life Sciences / Health Sciences / Social Work</b>		
<b>G</b>	<b>Science Lecture Complex</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>Women's Residence</b>
<b>GSB</b>	<b>Graduate School of Business</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Women's Residence</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Physical Sciences</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>Printing / Facilities / Services</b>
<b>H1</b>	<b>Engineering / Computer Science</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>Gymnasium</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Greenhouse</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Paruk Residence (Men)</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Renaud Hall of Education</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Men's Residence</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>Asoka Theatre</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Lecture Theatre Complex</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Humanities</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Biomedical Resource Centre</b>
<b>LB</b>	<b>Law / Oliver Thambo</b>	<b>VRTC</b>	<b>Vibration Research &amp; Testing Centre</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Commerce / Mathematics / IS&amp;T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>Technical Services</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Govan Mbeki Centre / Research Admin</b>		<b>Visitors' Parking</b>

## 1.6 Research Methods

The sampling technique used was judgement sampling. The reason is that it allows the researcher to select individuals on the basis of specific criteria (Brink, 1991). In this case, the principal criterion that determined their selection was that they were in leadership positions in the major student political organizations. The principal techniques that were used to gather data were semi-structured interviews. The reason for employing this technique is that it allows interviewees to offer opinions and draw attention to issues that may not have been considered by the interviewer. The sample population was drawn from a number of former student leaders available on campus (BOTH). Ten people were interviewed. The study population consisted of eight people from various clubs and societies and two ordinary students who were regarded as 'neutral bystanders'. The eight people were selected to represent the four main student political organizations, namely SASCO, SADESMO, ANCYL, SUCA and Socialist Student Movement. Two were chosen from each party.

The questionnaires used through the study were open-ended. This was specifically for the purposes of gathering the additional information from the interviews. Most of the interviews had to be conducted in the individual respondent's rooms, because it was difficult to find them in the SRC offices. The interviews were conducted at times that were appropriate to individual's schedules. This was to assist those with literary problems and to allow for flexibility. Each of the respondents was given a copy of the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were drafted in English in order to grasp the accurate information and to be politically correct. Moreover, to facilitate accuracy in recording the responses; a tape recorder was used during the interview. This led to stylistic editing to improve clarity. It is hoped however, that the actual responses are presented as clearly as possible. After the interviewees were conducted, the interviews were once again briefed and allowed to comment on what they had presented.

The responses were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is qualitative analysis, which involves sorting information into themes (Hayes, 2000). Themes, according to Hayes are the repeated ideas or topics, which can be detected in the material being analysed and which come up on more than one occasion in a particular set of data. The researcher read through the data several times. This was to identify the frequent themes. Consequently, the rising themes were then categorized and analysed. It should be noted that thematic analysis though is a useful method of exploring the depth of qualitative data. Nevertheless, it is a precise and difficult process (Hayes, 2000).

### **1.6.1 Ethics and accountability**

The anonymity of the respondents was observed. The researcher was aware of the need for confidentiality in this study. More so, in a confidential survey, the researcher may well know the identity of individual respondents. The researcher has to guarantee that no identifying information will be revealed to any one else (Brink, 1991:16).The respondents were assured that their responses would be treated with strict confidentiality

and that their names would not be recorded anywhere. Therefore, in the analysis of the data, the respondents' names were not given out to ensure confidentiality.

### **1.6.2 Validity and Reliability**

Both qualitative and quantitative researchers agree that research findings need to be reliable and valid (Woods and Cantanzaro, 1998 in Brink, 1991:16). In addition, Brink further distinguishes between these two concepts in the following manner (1991:16). Validity concerned with confirming the truth-value or believability of the findings that have been established by the researcher, which means the extent to which the data provides insight. Reliability focuses on identifying and documenting recurrent accurate and consistent features as patterns or themes (Brink, 1991). Validity refers to the degree an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring whilst reliability looks for the degree of consistency or accuracy with which an instrument measures an attribute (Brink, 1991).

### **1.6.5 Limitations of the study**

The main limitation of this study is that it comprised of a small sample of students at Westville and Howard College campus, which may not be regarded as wholly accurate representation of UKZN student population (a further request will be made to the SRC's to provide the researcher with the number of students in clubs and societies organization. The Howard college campus was chosen because of accessibility and reducing costs of conducting the research, considering that the study was self-sponsored. Another limitation of the study is that the use of questionnaires did not allow for probing and in-depth description of participants' opinions about student leadership and their services. However, the use of the questionnaire enabled the researcher to reach a wide range of students, in the process collecting a variety of views.

## **1.7 Thesis Structure**

Given the South African context and the necessity for a progressive and transformative Higher Education System it would be a great danger and injustice when this said institution become nothing more than supermarkets of efficiency, creating a breeding

ground for a bulging black middle class, cronies of party politics and uncritical patriots of the present system of government. The thesis is composed of Five Chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and the background to the study. It gives the aims and objectives as well as the research question. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework of the study, which is based on the transition theory and articulation of transition by David Ginsburg and Paulo Freire respectively. The methodology of the research is discussed in Chapter 3, which detail the research design, data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 discusses in detail the nature and character of student activism in South Africa and question the nature and character of transformation with regards to activities of the merger process of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The conclusion and recommendations are provided in Chapter 5.

## Chapter Two

### Theoretical Framework

#### 2.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework of this research is based on Ginsburgh's transition theory on broad issues and will be integrated with Transition Articulation according to Rotmans *et al* (2001) and Paulo Freire. Freire quotes Karl Mannheim about the changes/transition,

*“In a society in which main changes are to be brought about through collective deliberation, and in which revaluations should be based upon intellectual insight and consent, a completely system of education would be necessary, one of which would focus its main energies on the development of our intellectual powers and bring about the frame of mind which can bear the burden of scepticism and which does not panic when many of the thought habits are doomed to vanish” (Mannheim:1936).*

Student leadership entered into a transition phase where the main changes [were] made by collective deliberation only as minors (student leaders). Their situation demanded that they be armed with courage (education, knowledge) to discuss their issues in their own context, be able to warn others of the dangers of time [that lies ahead] and offer them the confidence and the strength to confront those dangers instead of surrendering their sense of self through submission to the decisions of others (Freire:1973). That biased students to re-evaluate constantly, to analyze 'findings', to adopt scientific methods and processes, and to perceive themselves in a dialectical relationship with their social reality enables them to engage meaningfully in transformation reality. Hence the employment of Student Governance Officer to can research relevant policy documents on behalf of student leadership. Whether the role of this office was seen as that remains questionable in some quarters of student leadership especially from those that come from Westville campus.

It is important to note that Freire distinguishes, though with varying degrees of clarity, between the power of 'the elite' and the potential power or agency of 'the masses'. The elite are the creators of myths and the primary forces behind epochal shifts. The elite are responsible for massification and the importation of solutions to problems. The elite dominate, destroy, crush, and place fear in the minds of the people. In contrast the people or the masses are consistently dehumanized by such practices during epochal transitions and engender varying degrees of transitive consciousness delineated by Freire as naive transitivity, critical transitivity, and fanaticized consciousness. According to Freire, the emergence of critical transitive consciousness is a central component for generating a notion of collective agency among the masses to circumvent the top down power of the elite.

Transitive consciousness emerges as the people begin to perceive and respond to the themes and myths which characterize their world. Naive transitivity, Freire (1973) argues, is the initial stage of transitive consciousness and is marked by gross simplifications and generalizations of problems; frail arguments and lack of interest in critical investigation; polemics rather than dialogue; and magical, emotional explanations for problems. This thesis seeks to argue that student leadership was characterized by the above mentioned characteristics of naïve transitivity. This shall be elaborated further in the thesis.

## **2.2 Transitional Theory and Transition Articulation**

Transitions are social transformation processes in which society or a complex subsystem of society gradually changes in a fundamental way over a period of time. Transitions are the result of technological, economic, ecological, social-cultural and institutional developments on different scale levels that influence and reinforce each other (Rotmans *et al*, 2001)<sup>6</sup>. Transitions are also a result of a number of system innovations that

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<sup>6</sup>Rotmans, J., Kemp, R., van Asselt, M. B. A., Geels, F., Verbong, G., Molendijk, K. G. P. and van Notten, P. (2001). *Transitions and Transition Management: The case for a low emission energy supply*. ICIS BV, Maastricht, Netherlands. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.icis.unimaas.nl/projects/transitions/general.htm> (Accessed: 04 April 2005).

reinforce each other and can occur at different scale-levels in different systems such as a geographic entity (a nation, region or city), a professional entity (like a sector or a regime) or a cultural entity (a set of paradigms) (Rotmans *et al*, 2001). According to these authors transition is therefore not determined in advance, but it is the outcome of a multitude of individual and collective decisions by different actors who act and react to new circumstances.

Transition theory is based on three underlying concepts, *vs.* multi-stage, multi-level and multi-change (Rotmans *et al*, 2001). Multi-stage at a conceptual level has four different transition phases that can be distinguished as follows:

- A pre-development phase of dynamic equilibrium where the status quo does not visibly change.
- A take-off phase where the process of change starts to get under way because the state of the system begins to shift.
- An acceleration phase where visible structural changes take place through an accumulation of socio-cultural, economic, ecological and institutional changes, which all influence each other. In the acceleration phase, there are collective learning processes, diffusion and imbedding processes.
- A stabilisation phase where the speed of social change reduces and a new dynamic balance is reached from the experiences gained.

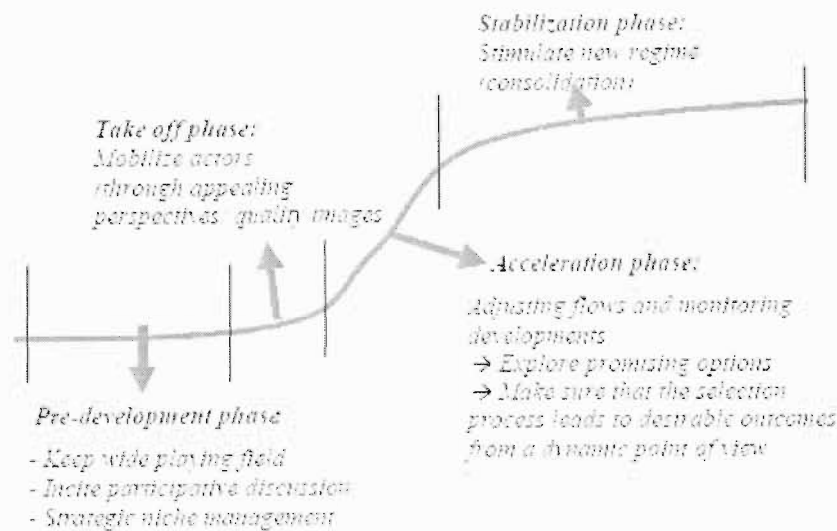


Figure 1: Showing different Phases of Transition. Source: adapted from Rotmans *et al* (2001).

- **Pre Development Phase**

Government initiative proposing the reduction of Higher Education institutions from 36 to 21 in preventing the duplication of structures because of the legacy of the past. This involved inciting, all relevant stakeholders and the Vice Chancellors of all the institutions in South Africa.

- **Take off Phase**

This was characterised by discontentment of Black Vice Chancellors nationally and at UKZN this was characterised by pre-merger phase Confrontation especially on their perspective of the proposed merger. (This will be elaborated later on this thesis)

- **Acceleration Phase**

The 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2004 was the cut off date as the old institutions as in UDW and UND cease to exist and merged into UKZN officially as according to government requirements. According to Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 OF 1997) Standard institutional Statute applies to ‘ every public higher education that has not made an institutional Statute until such time as the council of such higher education institution makes its own institutional Statute under section 32 of Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended. This was followed by an appointment of Professor M. Makgoba as Acting V.C of the new institution. A new coat of arms was unveiled and new institutional motto was also introduced: “*to become a premier university of African scholarship*”. Further a new mission as: “*a truly South African University that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engage with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequalities and the imbalances of the past*”.

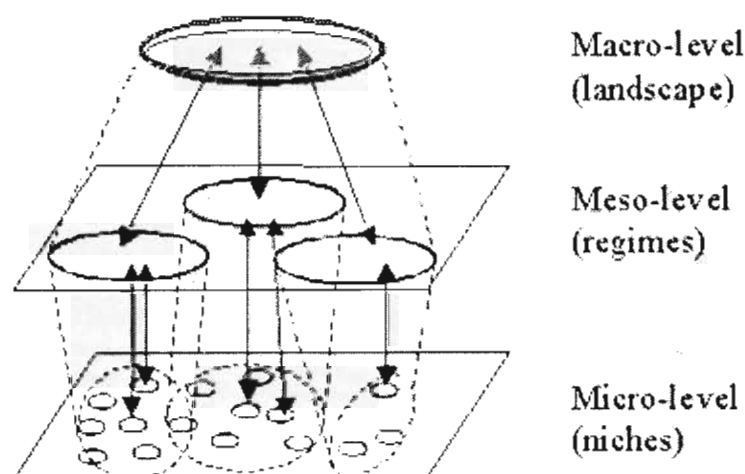
- **Stabilization Phase**

A series of pacts negotiated by elites representing the various protagonists’ academics, council and student leadership was part of the ‘elite’ who took part in the negotiations at various levels. On student systems (Financial Aid, Admin & Student Support) there was consensus on every issue. Also there were series of talks with regard to student governance policies. This culminated at the appointment of the Chancellor and the Vice- Chancellor of the new institutions. A detailed account of these processes will later be tackled in this thesis.

The stages of multistage are explained in a diagrammatic form in figure 1. According to figure 1, during the pre-development phase the playing field is kept wide and participative discussions are initiated. At a take off phase key players are mobilised through a number of avenues. An acceleration phase looks at available options as well

driving the process such that it leads to desirable outcomes. The final stage is that where the new regime asserts its power and consolidates its hegemony.

The multi-level concept is espoused from an understanding that at a macro-level the societal landscape is determined by changes in: the macro economy, political culture, demography, natural environment, and worldviews and paradigms (Rotmans *et al*, 2001). Those authors also hold that there are undercurrents that can play an important role in speeding up or slowing down a transition of a societal landscape, with its core remaining in most part unyielding (See figure 2).



**Figure 2:**

The social norms, interests, rules and belief systems operate at the meso-level and underlie strategies of companies, organisations and institutions and policies of political institutions. At this level the dynamics is determined by dominant practices, rules and shared assumptions which are most geared towards optimising rather than transforming systems. The micro-level (niche-level) on the other hand is driven by individual actors, technologies and local practices. At this level, variations to and deviations from the status quo can occur as a result from new ideas and new initiatives, such as new techniques, alternative technologies and social practices (Rotmans *et al*, 2001).

The concept of multi-change on the other hand speaks to an idea that from a complexity point of view a transition can be described as a transformation process from relative slow

equilibrium dynamics through a period of rapid dynamics into new slow equilibrium dynamics (S-curve). A transition can be described in terms of creation of new structures and destruction of old structures as a result of bottom-up and top-down pressures. In the course of a transition, the nature of change varies.

The theory of transition is intensely articulated by Ginsburg in his 1995 account to entitled "*Taking Democracy Seriously*". The underlying assumptions of the theory of transition are that a successful transition from one state of affairs to another is brought about as a result of a compromise between opposing forces. For instance the Ginsburg and Webster (1995) suggested that a successful transition from authoritarianism to democracy can only come about as a result of negotiation, of pacts between reformers and moderates in the state and moderates in the opposition. This is also supported by Przeworski (1991) who strongly believed that pro-democratic forces need to be prepared to offer concessions in exchange for democracy.

#### Part II of theory

This part will explore Freire extrapolations on the revolution in education, Gramsci on hegemony and education and its relevance to change/transition in educational landscape in South Africa and more particularly at UKZN.

Education is always political and that the aim of good pedagogy is to enable people to increase their understanding of their own objective conditions. Freire writes in his book *Literacy and Revolution* that such understanding leads them to change the world as they climb out of the oppression in which they have been submerged.

Education for freedom implies constantly and permanently the exercise of consciousness turning in itself in order to discover itself in the relationships with the world, trying to explain the reasons which can make clear the concrete situation of people in the world. But it is not enough – we need to transform the social realities, in order to develop action upon which these realities can be transformed and thereby and constantly, assess the unity between any action and any reflection.

As noted earlier student movement has since failed to constantly bring unity, action and reflection on their mandate (Challenge the critical consciousness from the beginning). Through the conscientisation process, both the researcher and respondents are able to get a better understanding of the present conjuncture. Schools are instruments of social control. Domestication of institutions which on its own is alienation of us in us, because the task of schools, in a wrong way...is a wrong perception – is to transfer to student the existing knowledge.

Knowledge exists because of consciousness, in its reflective power. Really, the existing knowledge today was born from the knowledge of yesterday, which became old, as well as future knowledge must be born from existing knowledge of today. (What could be learned today?) - What does student movement mean today? Has it found itself reflectively and critically and do they have any ideological/dialectical inclination – to move themselves forward.

**Or**

They have come to school as students invited to assume a passive attitude in order to receive the transference of the existing knowledge without reflection of the possibility of the creation of this knowledge like their predecessors. For example another noticeable feature is that most of the student, while very sure of what they did not like in it, yet lacked a depth of insight into what can be done. One found wherever he went the question being asked repeatedly 'where do we go from here' (Biko, 1977). This was a generation that questioned as they engaged the system in action.

Instead of transferring the existing knowledge it is necessary to invite consciousness to assume the active attitude without which it is impossible to create knowledge Radicalism. We are seeing a demise in consciousness since the student movement aligned itself with party politics which have since gained dominance. This has led to the student movement becoming neutral. For example the ANC-aligned South African Student Congress and the ANC Youth League cannot bite the hand that feed them (the ANC led government). This

does not seek to blur the fact that SASCO and ANCYL are autonomous organizations. These two organizations are in an alliance the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA) this then means that there would have alliance meetings and agree on a single co-ordinated alliance programme of action. They are neutral as the ANC privatizes education. Freire argues that neutrality always conceals a choice. As education seeks to unveil its own political options, to define itself in relation to the productive forces, the political power structure, and the dominant ideology of the South African society, the student movement of the present day has been defeated.

Not only in the universities, but also in secondary and primary schools, education is always a political event. Power is inseparable from education. Those who hold power define what education will be, its methods, programme and curriculum (Freire: 1973).

### **2.2.1 Hegemony and Education**

Hegemony has been defined, in strictly Gramscian terms as a social condition in which all aspects of social reality are dominated by or supportive of a single class (Gramsci: 1971). I go along with the definition. However, since my concerns, with respect to exploring the theory of radical student movement in twenty-first century South Africa, extend beyond class, I would substitute the phrase dominant group for a single class.

Mayo (1999) argues that social institutions such as universities and other educational establishment are not neutral, rather, they serve to cement the existing hegemony, and therefore intimately tied to the interest of the most powerful social groups (in this regard the ANC and the ANC led government) and the bourgeoisie. It becomes even worse when student movements blindly support the hegemonic social groups. This was evident as Hamilton (2004) attested that students at Wits University received letters on April 19 which announced that their bursaries will be cut by 50%. This would subsequently lead to a situation where 35% of the 25,000 students would be forced to leave university. Students gathered spontaneously to discuss how to organize protests against those proposals. The students struggle was hijacked by the unrepresentative Student Representative Council (SRC), and the ANC-aligned South African Student Congress

and the ANC Youth League. The latter clearly came under pressure from the ANC leadership to restore order and to ensure that all the protests will be called off as soon as possible. This happens amidst the merger with JCE (Johannesburg College of Education). This was not only the case for Wits University but affects other universities, such as the University of KwaZulu Natal as well.

The only possible solution to this quagmire wherein hegemony can be contested is the very terrain that supports it (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci argued that, people working for social transformation (in this case students) seeking to transform neoliberal educational policies- have to engage in a war of position (Mayo, 1999), a process of wide –ranging social organization and cultural influence, for example, Landless People Organization (LPO), Anti- Privatization Movement (APM), Trade Unions, fellow students organizations and pupils organizations and the general community. Mayo further argues that it is through this process that the group creates, together with other groups and sector in the society, a historical block in which classes or their factions are related.

*“ Every revolution has been preceded by an intense labour of criticism, by the diffusion of culture and the spread of ideas among masses of men who at first resistant and think only of solving their own immediate economic and political problems for themselves who have no ties of solidarity with others in the same condition ”* (Gramsci, 1971).

Student movements in higher education can play a crucial role in this war of position, entailing a wide range of counter hegemonic activity in all spheres of life. Counter hegemonic of the logic of globalization and its effects. Student movement should be able to deconstruct this myth (Globalization) for what it is and thus being counter hegemonic to the world unipolar power structure. They should expose it as Mishra (1999) sees it:

- Globalization undermines the ability of national government to pursue the objective of full employment and economic growth through reflationary policies.
- Globalization results in an increasing inequality in wages and working conditions through greater labour market flexibility, a differentiated post Fordist work-force and decentralised collective bargaining. Global competition and mobility of

capital result in 'social dumping' and downward shift in wages and working conditions.

- Globalization exerts a downward pressure by prioritizing the reduction of deficit and debt and lowering of taxation as key objectives of state policy.
- Globalization weakens the ideological underpinnings of social protection, especially that of a national minimum, by undermining national solidarity and legitimating inequality of rewards.
- Globalization weakens the basis of social partnership and tripartism by shifting the balance of power away from labour and the state and towards capital.
- Globalization constrains the policy options of nations by virtually excluding the left-of-centre approaches. In this sense it spells the end of ideology as far as welfare state policies are concerned.
- The logic of globalization comes into conflict with the logic of national community and democratic politics. Social policy emerges as a major issue of contention between global capital and the democratic nation state.

### **2.3 Conscientisation**

The PYA structures are allies to the ruling party and to a greater extent sponsored by them. The question arises then, who will reflect on their plight? The greatest mistake for the student movement was to fail to assert themselves post 1994. They failed to reconscientize. Conscientisation does not occur automatically. It comes mainly from a critical educational effort based on favourable historical conditions, it has to do with the process in which (the student movement), not as recipients but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives, and their capacity to transform it (Freire P, 71 Literacy And Revolution).

Conscientisation seeks the awakening of critical consciousness as Freire asserts, and results in the identification and naming of social ills which constitute oppressive circumstances fee increase for entrant students, which limits access to higher education in the Premier University of Africa Scholarship. The fragmented consciousness suffered by

student movement denies them access to each other in their collaborative search for a picture of their total situation. A disjointed effort on common issues that affect student movement calls for unity. The present day student movement, even sister structures do not unite of common issues, for example the campaign for Free Education by SASCO was not even supported by ANCY League on campuses even though members could have dual membership of both structures (No ANC FLAG, or message or support was sent to SASCO Providently on this campaign).

Maintaining fragmentation of consciousness is always on the side of the power holder (management of transition). Where fragmentation of consciousness gives place to collaboration through dialogue, revolution is invited. On this Freire says:

*“Men are historic beings, incomplete and conscious of being incomplete, revolution is as natural and permanent a human dimension as is education”.*

So the process of conscientisation has a significant political dimension to it. People who are in the process of liberation, or are discovering their liberated consciousness, can only continue the process when they commit themselves to the world, in this regard to educational struggles not party partisan politics. Conscientisation is essentially geared to the radical transformation of social reality.

Freire is correct when he asserts that objective social reality neither exists nor can be transformed by mere chance, because both are the result of human action. Because the social reality is produced by [student] and conditions then, transforming their condition is an historical task which also must be performed by [them]. One of the main obstacles Freire writes to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those that are within it and thus stifles the emergence of critical consciousness. In this regard, student activists are failing to articulate their position partly meanwhile they are looking for jobs in either the university or the government (**BAZINGEL’ BEPHETH’ USAWOTI**). They fail to unmask the oppressor (neoliberal policies in education) and

work for their liberation through organized struggle and action, through dialogue, reflection and communication.

This has led to the polarization of the educated few from the rest of (Black Community) which has led to the questioning of the relevancy of education today, its mission and philosophy. This coupled with the centres of knowledge production (merged institutions) have become the breeding grounds for cooperate BEE managers without consciousness, which in itself defeats the whole process of the liberation role of education and greater transformation in South Africa. The silence the reflective voice of student activist is worrying. This on its own raises questions of the content of the given educational curriculum as to whether it is responsive to the needs or ails of the society.

Given the robust history of previous Black institutions and the significant impact of their alumnae on the local and global context it is unquestionable the validity and relevancy of the matriculation. However, the current circumstances of corperatised activists and higher education system (mergers), it is prudent more then ever to examine issues as it relates to the questioning of the current state of these institutions.

The silence that has been adopted in the post merged institution and post 1994 broadly is due to the failures of student movement to engage in the discourse of oppression with the goal of exploring and deconstructing the dominant ideologies of subjection, betraying the scrutinizing role of a liberating education (Including Institutions).

Higher education institutions, especially universities, have a long history of struggle against apartheid and for transformation. These struggles have scored many victories over the years. However, their impacts have been unequal, with more visible progress in universities – especially black institutions. However, in Westville/ campus where there is a large number of Indian student who benefit from the student movement and student struggles but this contingent of student is lethargic and apathetic. (They benefit from the victories of student movement victories namely as captured in 1999 manifesto:

- Free, dynamic and compulsory education

- Foster on culture of learning, teaching and service
- Avoid financial exclusion for learners
- Quality School leadership teams and administrative capacity
- Integrated ABET and skills development with NQF
- National Plan and funding system for higher education.

Balibal (2002) writes ‘A past that has no present, and which will be’ this is the case with the contingent of these Indian students. The mergers seek to homogenous the students who have different understanding of the current conjuncture. Experience proves that this contingent is satisfied for as long as benefits. Only one Indian student has been part of the deliberations of the student participation in the merger process. He was from ISA (Islamic Students Organization). This leaves much to be desired even though students have a common history of oppression, conquest and been exposed to colonization of special type (apartheid).

The student movement must ensure that the ideological form become an apriori condition between individuals and social groups (within student movement) – not suppressing all differences but relativising them and subordinating them to itself in such a way that is the difference between ‘ourselves’ ... which wins out and is lived as irreducible (Balibal, 2002).

The merger has managed to deal with signifiers (Name, Emblem, Process and Statutes) however there are still hiccups in the process itself – fee increment (2005) which limits access and a direct insult to student movement. ‘Dimly (the student movement) and steadily (students) are loosing the love, respect, sacrifices o f (their struggle) because of circumstance’ (Balibal, 2002). In fact the student movement is no longer taken serious by its own allies. This also has a bearing because the student movement predominantly is a youth formation, and this on its own is depolitisation of the youth, a protagonist of revolution.

The cardinal premise is that the analysis of political and ideological structures must be grounded in their material conditions of existence and the historical premise (Morrison, T, 2002). The merged institution was to be the premier university of African scholarship serving as a facilitator in, and engineering the highest level of teaching; research and community service to create and innovate advancement in technological and human development in the African continent and world wide. Its mission is 'a truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engage with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequalities and imbalances of the past'.

However, it contradicts its own mission given the cardinal premise stated above. The UKZN does not consider the material consideration of the majority of South Africans, yet it claims to be a true South African University. 'For the purpose of this report, student fee income in 2005 has been based on inflation linked increase of 3,7% in tuition and miscellaneous fee ... an important assumption underlying the 2005 fee budget is that a net reduction of 2000 in student numbers with the university as a whole'.

This calls for the student movement to revisit its struggle which is fundamentally shaped by the fact that higher education occupies a special place in the struggle for ideological hegemony in the society in this case, production of bourgeoisie characterized by social and economic inequalities. Institutions of higher education are usually the base from which intellectual ideas and the shaping of public opinion are produced. To this end, universities are sites for production of new ideas; occupy a special place in the struggle for hegemony (Gramsci, 1971).

Karl Marx writes in his selected works that bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social without struggles and dangers necessarily resulting there from. They desire the existing state of the society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. Such is the movement today, they wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat. The bourgeoisie naturally conceives the world in which it is supreme to be the best. This is not the case in at UKZN. There is a reality that not enough attention has been paid to the transformation

of the institution, particularly on curriculum transformation. It is highly impossible to begin to think about shaping the type of an intellectual that will be produced by an institution of higher learning, without firstly, and foremost, dealing with or even changing the curriculum content that will give rise to them. The issue of transforming the curriculum at UKZN is particularly a tricky one, since such demands are always projected by academics as interference of academic autonomy and lowering of standards.

For too long the student movement have allowed not been able to engage critically on issues of standards, because they lack in theoretical development. *“Without revolutionary theory, there can be no real revolutionary movement”* (Slovo J, article available on line [www.marxist.org/subject/africa/slovo/1998/nationaldemocratic-revolution.htm](http://www.marxist.org/subject/africa/slovo/1998/nationaldemocratic-revolution.htm)). In SASCO’s Congress Discussion papers of 2003, there is an acknowledgement by student leaders that because no one possess a necessary theoretical instrument to engage in this act the student movement have failed dismally to meet a challenge of building a National Student Unity.

The new institution and student leadership need to first and foremost review their institutional culture, to be responsive to the challenge of the new millennium. There is ‘chaos of the religious, educational, economic and political system’ in South Africa.

Karim (2004) argues that the main aim of education is not to acquire knowledge alone, but action. As graduates, it is your responsibility to pursue without fear, the change that you regard as necessary and just. We need to apply their knowledge wisely and use it for the betterment of broader society. This was exemplified by Steve Biko whilst his restriction by the repressive state of Apartheid. *“A prophet is not without honour except in his own country”* this is what Stubbs A, in his piece Martyr of Hope says about Steve Biko. He argues that in all the black education centers of the country Steve had attained almost messier status. But his community in King William area, Steve gave them a community development unsurpassed anywhere in the country that time. He was instrumental in getting another organization, the Zimele Trust Fund, established nation-

wide; he had transformed King itself, on the Black side, from depressed apathy into semblance of militant solidarity (Stubbs A.,:1978 A forward to I Write What I like).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Martin Luther in 1948 saw a danger on the misconception of the purpose of education. Most of the 'brethren' think that education should equip them with proper instruments of exploitation so that they can forever trample over the masses (makes you think of heirs of BEE). Still others think that education should furnish with noble ends rather than means to an end he concluded, (he continues to maintain that education has two-fold function to perform in the life of man and in society: the one is utility and the other is culture. Education must enable a man to become more efficient, to achieve with increasing facility the legitimate goals of life he concluded. The function of education, therefore, is to reach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education that stops at efficiency many proves to be the greatest threat to society.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Organizational Culture and the New Institution**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The history of South African Education is embedded in apartheid discrimination and the policies of social exclusion of blacks from the mainframe of South African life. The system of dualism (dual societies) was entrenched even at the level of spatial formation and configurations. The education of the populace was also segregated according to racial configurations determined by the apartheid regime. This segregation was characterized by abundance of resources and expertise allocated to the historically white institutions and the very poor services and expertise allocated to the historically black institutions.

The implementation of restructuring in the public higher education and training system has been a much trickier process. It has been fraught with political difficulty in light of the high profile, 'public' nature of the restructuring debate. While historically advantaged institutions were calling for recognition of efficiency and excellence, the historically disadvantaged institutions called for 'redress'. However, the situation on the delivery sites and the receiving end of this transformation seems to lose its intended noble motives. In the post merger students demanded audit on Student Failures, and also

demanding moratorium of student's academic exclusions. Prof Hugh Africa was approached to become the project consultant on this issue. These are his findings<sup>7</sup>:

### ***3.2 Causes of student failure: Racism***<sup>8</sup>

Since 1994, South Africa has committed itself to the establishment of a non-sexist and non-racist society. Yet because, for centuries our lives were dominated by a racist ideology, it would be naïve to assume that manifestations of racism in institutions are non-existent. It is equally difficult to link some kinds of behaviours to unmitigated racism. However, there is a strong perception among students that the poor examination performance of some African students is due to racist attitudes. The remarks and attitudes of some academic staff members are cited as follows:

- **Our black (African) students have difficulties in grasping abstract concepts.**
- **Our African students have difficulties with Mathematics and therefore have difficulty with Accountancy.**

In a study conducted on racism among students at the former University of Natal, a distinction was drawn between 'old – fashioned' and 'modern' racism. It was further argued that old-fashioned racist beliefs tend to be re-structured in the guise of modern racism in a context where overt forms of racial expression become less socially and politically acceptable. An investigation was conducted in the Department of Optometry in September 2004 because students reported that lack of success among African students was engendered by racism. In a workshop held at the Howard College Campus in 2002 it was reported that the staff are sometimes racist. The reported racism is between Indians and Africans and blacks and whites. A concerted effort must be made to build trust and confidence among the different racial groups. A study conducted in 2001 at the Pietermaritzburg Campus of UKZN observed:

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<sup>7</sup> Africa, H. (2005) *Audit of Student Failure Report*, The University of KwaZuluNatal Audit

<sup>8</sup> Africa, H. (2005) *Audit of Student Failure Report*, The University of KwaZuluNatal Audit

- Taking into account the country's history of racialised unequal power relations and the way these shaped individual subjectivities, one could investigate how if at all, the institutions' social and discursive practices, both curricular and co-curricular, challenge both black and white staff and students to reshape their subjectivities towards equality and away from inferiority and superiority; away from authoritarianism and towards minimal domination, and respect and care for self and others (Odendaal 2001 in Africa, H: 2005).

UKZN's resolved that all cases of discrimination and racism must be reported and addressed regardless of their impact on the academic enterprise.

### ***3.3 Profile of student exclusions***

UKZN has inherited two systems of student exclusions on the basis of poor academic performance. At the former University of Natal appeals were heard by a Dean's Review Committee, and those exclusions that were upheld by the Faculty were reported to the Senate Re-admissions Appeals Committee (SRAC). It is not entirely clear what system was used at the former University of Durban-Westville. Senior academic staff state that there were recommendations for exclusion at the faculty level, but it would appear that the exclusion policy was not strictly enforced. The new UKZN model makes provision for two structures, the Faculty Exclusion Appeals Committee (FEACOM) and the Academic Exclusion Appeals Committee (AECOM). Appeals are first tabled at the FEACOM, and then at the AECOM.

Table 2 reflects the exclusions at the former University of Natal for the years 2000 to 2004, and Table 3 reflects those at the former University of Durban-Westville for the years 2000, 2001 and 2004.

**University of Natal**  
**Exclusions and Enrolments by Race**

**Table 1**

Race	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	Excl.	Enr.	Exl.	Enr.	Exl.	Enr.	Exl.	Enr.	Exl.	Enr.
African	212	6164	271	6477	290	7454	346	8299	350	9643
Coloured	8	435	8	500	15	566	14	691	30	786
Indian	203	6390	211	6774	184	7411	246	8009	241	8282
Other		2				2		12		8
White	47	4261	46	4488	44	4913	54	5469	68	5659
<b>Total</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>17252</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>18239</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>20346</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>22480</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>24378</b>

**Source:** (Africa,H:2005)

At the former University of Natal over a five year period, the total number of exclusions increased from 470 to 689, an increase of 46.5%. Over the same period the number of exclusions for African students increased from 212 to 350, an increase of 65%. Over the same period the overall increase in student enrolment was 41% and that of African students was 56% (Table 2).

At the former University of Durban-Westville over a three year period the total number of exclusions increased from 6 to 185, an increase of 2983%. Over the same period the number of exclusions for African students increased from 5 to 122, an increase of 2340%. Over the same period the overall increase in student enrolment was 53% and that of African students was 36% (Table 3).

The total number of exclusions must be seen in relation to the overall growth in student enrolments and that of African students, in particular.

**University of Durban-Westville**  
**Exclusions and Enrolments by Race**

**Ex UDW**

Race	2000		2001		2004	
	Excl.	Enr.	Exl.	Enr.	Excl.	Enr.
African	5	4990	25	4903	122	6764
Coloured	0	96	0	100	1	189
Indian	1	2852	10	2966	59	5129
Other						1
White	0	159	0	184	3	292
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8097</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>8153</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>12375</b>

**Table 2 (Source: Africa,A: 2005)**

**NB: No exclusions are evident on the database for 2002 and 2003**

**Analysis By race:**

- **African Students in year 2000: the rate of exclusions = 9.98%**
- **African students in year 2004: the rate of exclusion = 0.55%**
- **Indian students in year 2000: Rate of exclusion = 0.03%**
- **Indian students in year 2004: Rate of exclusion =1.15%**
- **White students in year 2000: Rate of exclusion = no exclusion**
- **White students in year 2004: Rate of exclusion = 1.027**

What follows from the above analysis is that there is a substantial decrease in exclusions for African students and an increase in exclusion for others.

During the course of 2004, a common uniform policy on exclusions and appeals for the new UKZN was adopted and this was approved by Senate on Monday 28 June 2004. The new policy was applied on a University-wide basis in November 2004. The General Academic Rules and Rules for Students 2005 provides for academic exclusions – right of appeal under sections GR 30 and GR 31.

### **3.4 Academic Exclusions: November 2004/January 2005 Statistics**

The discourse of academic exclusion has been on the top of the list among university academics, Student Representative Councils and University Management. Contradictory positions about the crises seem to be reaching the public. Are academic exclusions a fact or fiction?

#### **3.4.1 Terms of reference One (Examination Sessions)**

The total number of students who were excluded for unsatisfactory performance in the November 2004/January 2005 examination sessions was 1866 and 1082 of these were African. Eight hundred and seventeen students submitted appeals to FEACOM. Of this number 380 were re-admitted and 437 were referred to AEACOM. Two hundred and twenty three appeals were upheld by AEACOM. Of the total number of 817 appeals 233 (28.5%) were excluded after due process and 584 (71.5%) were re-admitted. As far as African students are concerned of the 1082 students who were excluded 474 appealed, 134 (28%) were excluded after due process and 72% were re-admitted. (Africa: 2005)

Applying the formula of degree years +2 for the completion of degree programmes the available statistics as at December 2004 reveal that 4 students at the former University of Natal and 6 students at the former University of Durban-Westville were in their 7<sup>th</sup> year and beyond.

It would appear as though the strict application of the new policy has led to the perception that there is an increase in the failure rate of African students. To dispel this perception a thorough statistical analysis of past academic performance should be undertaken by each faculty. Alternatively the available statistics ought to be publicised under the supervision of faculty academic staff and students.

On the basis of the available documentary evidence and the interviews conducted with the excluded students, there is no reason to conclude that there was an abnormal increase in the number of exclusions in November 2004/January 2005.<sup>9</sup>

### **3.4.2 Term of Reference: Two**

#### **Causes of Failure: Financial<sup>10</sup>**

Many students from poor families join the University when they are not assured of funding. The immediate retort of many to this statement would be: “then why come to University”? Those who have gone hungry know what hunger is, and, similarly, those who have hungered for knowledge and education understand the motive of those who come to University with no funds. According to the Student Counselling and Careers Centre some of the students are dependent on the meagre pensions of grandparents and live under very stressful conditions. It is reported that some students have no accommodation on arrival and some secure very inferior accommodation. As a consequence of the financial constraints experienced by students some have neither meal nor book allowances and this condition makes for academic failure. One group of counsellors proposed that academic staff should learn a little more about their students. The question is do the academics want to know about their students? The issue of the financing of higher education is a vexed question and UKZN should engage in the debate on the funding of higher education which to date is a R10 billion operation.

### **3.4.3 Term of Reference: Three<sup>11</sup>**

**To investigate the impact of institutional culture and stereotypes on the relationship between the teaching staff and students.**

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<sup>9</sup> Africa, H , (2005) *Audit of Student Failure*, University of KwaZuluNatal Audit.

<sup>10</sup> ibid

<sup>11</sup> ibid

Institutions of higher learning and universities, in particular, are complex and multi-layered structures that bring together highly trained academic staff and students who together constitute a learning community. In South Africa these institutions do not only reflect this international complexity but also reflect the legacy and baggage of our divided past. Institutions that were formerly characterised as white and those as black have varying traditions and legacies. The new UKZN is an institution straddling between two cultures and traditions and the challenge facing it is how to marry these into a vibrant new dispensation. The old University of Natal had a way of doing things and so did the University of Durban-Westville. It would be unproductive to say which way was better or worse, but it is of vital importance for the new institution to forge a new way of doing things.

There is a perception among a section of the University community that the traditions and practices of the old University of Natal are predominating and that the good practices of the former University of Durban-Westville are being discarded. And there is a strong body of opinion that disliked and disapproved of the practices of the old University of Natal which were seen as discriminatory and racist and neo-liberal.

The challenge of UKZN is how to chart a route that will be seen to be even-handed, fair, open, and transparent. There is no quibble about the question of academic excellence. This must be the goal and cornerstone of the new institution. There is also no question, about the imperative to subscribe to the highest international academic standards and norms.

It is generally conceded that a University has a pecking order, but as the principle of rationality determines the relations among members of university community, canons of human decency and fair play govern the relationships. Traditionally students were perceived to be at the lower levels of the collegial hierarchy but the new order has accentuated and emphasized the rights of all people regardless of their status. Students, in particular, have over the years asserted their rights in institutions of higher learning.

Academic conceit and arrogance are features typically displayed in universities in varying forms and degrees. When however, these features are accompanied by discriminatory and racist tendencies, then the normal scholarly interaction between academic staff and students are adulterated. In a study conducted at the University of Natal in 1999 it was reported that there was a perception that some staff “looked down” upon students. It is further alleged that some staff differentiate between students; white students are treated differently from black students.

It is argued that some academic staff members do not think highly of the intellectual abilities of black students and consequently the poor performance of students becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. There is also the allegation that some students expect to achieve good results with minimum effort. An academic interviewed stated strongly that students doing Accountancy relied on ‘luck’ and he stated eloquently that good results in Accountancy were not a matter of luck but of hard work. Those who were not strong in Mathematics and did not work hard were cases for failure. This illustrates a nice point. If the lecturer’s starting position is that students do not know Mathematics, and rely on luck, they are pre-disposed to be failures. This is further illustrated by negative statements that are made such as: “*this class is too large, next year only half of you will be here*” (Interviewee).

The nature and quality of interaction between the teaching staff and students is surely coloured and determined by the views that each holds of the other. The principle of rationality dictates that every student who is admitted by the University can count on maximum support from the institution to ensure that he/she completes her/his programme on time. The responsibility for success is shared between the teaching staff, non-academic support staff and the students.

At most times an institutional culture assumes that members of its community have the same shared values. Over the past ten years institutions which had a predominantly white student population have admitted a large number of black students who now constitute the majority. To what extent can it be said that students and teaching staff share the same

values? It is reported that black students feel like interlopers in an environment that expects them to adjust to it but does little to adjust to its large membership – the students. To what extent do black students feel socially and academically integrated? The measures adopted in the past of keeping lines of communication between the teaching staff and students must be re-enforced through formal and informal means.

There is evidence according to Africa's report 2005 that in some subject areas black students receive border line pass marks by design so that they cannot proceed to post-graduate studies. The case in Engineering has already been cited, but this is alleged to apply to Education studies as well.

This investigation does not focus on the relationship between teaching staff and graduate students, but the few cases reported give cause for alarm. Some students in Law and the Humanities continue their studies under difficult conditions which merit investigation. According to Africa's report the conduct of some students in lectures leaves much to be desired. Students should not be allowed to disregard the courtesies and styles of conduct that are a part and parcel of academic life and strict codes of conduct should be drawn up and applied.

The concept of institutional culture affects not only the individual relations between teaching staff and students. There is a perception that some of the staff at the Westville Campus feel that they have to take a defensive position against all things associated with the Howard College Campus-staff and students, and the same applies to the Howard College Campus in respect of the Westville Campus. This attitude then creates 'An us versus them' tension. This atmosphere cannot create an enabling environment for relationships between staff and students of both campuses. Strong measures have to be taken to create a harmonious atmosphere, through formal academic and non-academic activities.

Issues pertaining to student institutional practices must also be recognised and taken into account. Students at the Westville Campus were accustomed to a culture of protest and in

many ways were more politicised than students at the Howard College Campus. It is said also that the management at the former black institutions was inept. This simplistic rationalization overlooks the fact that in terms of liberation politics, the former black institutions of higher learning were more liberal towards student activism, precisely because the former white institutions were regarded as colonialist. Now UKZN is faced with the daunting task of having to merge these two historical cultures. This is to be achieved through the codification of policies and practices which will then govern the relationships between teaching staff and students. The basic principle to govern these relationships must be mutual respect. Precisely, because this is a difficult area to monitor, UKZN should establish a mechanism to evaluate progress or assign the function to one of the existing structures. It is critical that examples of good practice from all campuses are harnessed, and the experience of students must be recognised.

### **3.5 One hurdle too many to cross**

The truth of the matter is that student leadership have to face the neoliberalism and globalization in the face. They should have maintained the basic principle that: “public education for everyone is an inalienable right guaranteed and paid for by the state. It must not be treated as a commodity. It must be radically democratic and, egalitarian and fair”. According to Fisher and Thomas (2004) this view of education goes against that imposed by some international organizations, which has ended driving a growing number of countries into a dilemma: should they choose to pay external debt or give their citizens education?

Charlot identifies seven major consequences of this dilemma:

- The neoliberal reduction of education (Like the UKZN Scenario mentioned above) to status of a commodity threatens humankind in its universal condition, in its cultural diversity and in its construction as a subject of rights
- Education starts to be conceived by the state as a form of social assistance and cease to be seen as a human right applicable to all and an essential component in effective citizenship.

- The increase in private schooling and the market logic of putting public educational institutions into competition with one another, and worse, companies getting schools to sell or advertise their products and services.
- Social inclusion is one of the roles of public schools, yet logic of neoliberalism prevents sufficient financial investment in education.
- The most important victims of this situation are those in most need: poor people, immigrants, indigenous people, ethnic, religious communities and cultural minorities (in South African case: the previously disadvantaged majority)
- Digital exclusion, where the new information and communication technologies are not accessible to everyone, and work according to profit motive. In UKZN, this further puts the first year students who come from the rural areas into a further disadvantage because they start using computers at tertiary institutions and they are expected to deliver like their disadvantaged counterparts. The question still remains: do the academics want to know about their students?
- Values such as freedom, autonomy and decentralization have been appropriated by neoliberal thought. It is necessary to rescue and redefine those values, linking them to the project of the construction of the new world. (Fisher and Thomas: 2004).

The issues highlighted above seek to question the nature of the present student leadership as to whether they are critical of their role in shaping the new world and the new educational discourse in South Africa. Student movement has been divided by SRC electioneering and power politics which do not benefit the entire student populace across the board. As mentioned earlier the student movement has since aligned itself with the ruling party which adopted GEAR (which was to be replaced by Agisa) as an economic policy of the country. The sad thing about this policy is that it has led to commodification of education and thus limited access to millions of aspirant South African youngsters.

There are two principles that inform these reflections. First – and this bears repeating – education is not a commodity. It is a universal right, linked to human condition

itself. Professor Charlot in Fisher and Ponniah (2004) demonstrates three fundamental education processes: Humanization, socialization and individualization (the latter meaning the universal right to be cultural different and as a person). There is no need for students to be expelled simply because they are black and the culture of Howard College campus is not politicised<sup>12</sup>. Hugh argues that Westville Campus was accustomed to a culture of protest and in many ways were more politicised than students at the Howard College Campus. Whilst students at Westville who damaged property, disrupted registration like the Howard College students were not charged. The windows in the main hall and the T-block lecture theatre, where students were trying to register, were broken. Police had to be called in to help campus security control the students. The SRC intervened, and the students marched to the Administration offices, where they handed in a memorandum of grievances to the university authorities.

The integration of these processes is possible when education is linked to progressive movements campaigning for more solidarity, more equality and more justice. In this case the question arises as to whether or not the ANC is still progressive as it approves GEAR, a self imposed structural adjustment policy to be the economic policy of the country. Or whether is the student leadership of UKZN not aware that their problems are neoliberal in nature? Or they are not critical at all if they are “*BAZINGELA BAPHETH'SAWOTI*” or trying to be seen to be “behaving properly” within “cooperative governance”.

Secondly according to Fisher and Ponniah (2004:204), education is an important instrument of struggle against all forms of violence, prejudice, exploitation, human degradation, and so on in building another form of globalization. Parallel to that globalization enhances the building of a new institution within a vision of a ‘Premier University of African Scholarship’. Student leadership should be well aware that

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<sup>12</sup> This is a specific reference to a Howard College SRC member who was expelled because he was mandated by the SRC to intervene on a popular protest earlier in 2005. At the time of writing of this thesis, the student has launched an appeal to the Chairperson of Council against his expulsion.

Africa not to mention the very communities they come from are still faced with the above mentioned social ills and the lack of service delivery by the very party they align themselves with. They should become real revolutionaries for a true transition of their institution and by so doing contributing towards the upliftment of their fellow students and the communities they come from. According to Freire (2000) when the revolutionary leader focuses on the people's needs, a true revolution may begin without the oppression. The true revolutionary leader has the power to liberate both the oppressed and the oppressors.

The right to education is the right to the effective appropriation of all serious knowledge and not simply basic information given by some boss (academic) or by the internet. Fisher and Ponniah (2004:204) argue that it is the right to intellectual activity, to express oneself, to imagination and to arts, to the domain of one's body, and to understand one's natural and social environment. It is the right to an understanding of one's relationship with the world, with the others and with oneself. Such kind of education requires transformation of institutions of higher learning and many of their practices. This transformation should along side educating teacher/academics and students alike about the principles of democratic organization- democratic participation in setting the curriculum, in management (along with all groups/stakeholders in the institutional community); and interdisciplinary exchanges over teaching methods; and team work ( Fisher and Ponniah,2004).

### ***3.6. Impact on civil society***

There are competing tendencies on the impact on civil society- the arbitrary process of economic globalization, and the growth of the intercontinental dialogue on rights among different people (Fisher and Ponniah, 2004). Both demonstrate the urgency of every single man and woman exercising their right to learning, questioning and creating throughout their lives.

According to Fisher and Ponniah (2004) the threat of the imposition of a single social and economic model is very real. This worldwide tendency involves privatization in both health and education. There is also a danger of denying the world's children and adults access to education. This is evident at UKZN, 'According to the Student Counselling and Careers Centre some of the students are dependent on the meagre pensions of grandparents and live under very stressful conditions'<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, not letting them have education in their culture as standards at this university are set in Western way of life and emphasizes the materialistic output of education. This retards progress in their studies and ultimately fail their exams. According to Africa, H Report (2005), it is argued that some academic staff members do not think highly of the intellectual abilities of black students and consequently the poor performance of students becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. This retards their personal development and denies that intelligence and creativity constitutes unique tools for sustainable development.

Modern globalization through market reforms---escalating tuition and user fees, and increasing state repression (with connivance of university authorities at UKZN) can as a result, have tragic consequences, including the possibility of a world where many people have their intelligence stunted. Nonetheless student leadership of today does not bother about what is happening around them and further do not engage vigorously in trying to locate student struggles within the present discourse of anti privatization to better defend the gains of their predecessors (Fisher and Ponniah, 2004) When it comes to new technologies, development nowadays tends to go along with the dominant market forces. This can generate perverse asymmetries and monopolies of thought. On the other hand , the ease and the speed of communication means these new technologies can favour cultural pluralism, creativity and the development of decentralised, autonomous network. This, the present student leadership fails to use to their advantage, to try and build a strong student movement in South Africa. This

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<sup>13</sup> Africa, H Report The University of KwaZuluNatal Audit of Student Failure 2005

contains the seeds of unimaginable democratic potential within campuses of UKZN and for the country at large.

### 3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, social justice is not possible without cognitive justice. The present danger of the monopolies of thought by student leadership that align themselves to the right defeats the very purpose of serving the poor fellow students. They can only liberate themselves by recognizing that:

- The right of education cannot be detached from social rights.
- It is not possible to pursue a new world without liberating formal education from old models of upbringing.
- Education is not a commodity, and opposition to different forms of commercializing education must be the central part of democratic educational project. (Fisher and Ponniah, 2004). These generally affect students from all walks of life and from the data collected, it is evident that students at UKZN are equally affected by these afore mentioned issues and therefore cannot be treated in isolation.

Furthermore, they should take into account the following important themes:

- Inequalities between men and women remain dramatic in South Africa and it is known that education can have positive consequences for women's lives, as well as for their families and society in general.
- Native people (Blacks) represent the biggest part of the population and their struggles should be supported by everyone including academics from UKZN.
- Education is highly important to campaigns against AIDS, which is killing thousands of people every year and damaging many countries prospects to development. (At the time of writing this thesis Professor R. Louw of UKZN Has recently passed on because of AIDS IN BRIEF: Comrade Ronald is a former member of the National Coalition for Gay & Lesbian Equality, one of the founders and volunteers of the KZN Coalition for Gay & Lesbian Equality.

He co-founded the Durban Lesbian & Gay Community & Health Centre, an organisation, which he was a Board and Management Committee member. A former teacher, Ronald was Head of Law School at the University of KZN, a criminal law professor and a Trustee to a number of organisations”

## **Chapter Four**

### **Democracy and its impact on Higher Education.**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Mayo (1999) maintains like Gramsci and Freire argue that higher education educational practices intended to generate democratic possibilities must be conceived not as a neutral process but as a political act. These acts can contribute to the consolidation of the existing hegemony, thereby serving a reproductive function, or they can be guided by an alternative transformative social vision (which is scarce in the Post-Colonial Africa).

#### **4.1.2 Democracy or (Neo-Apartheid)**

While democracy is one of the most cherished values among social justice values in South Africa, however it is much more complex than it might appear at first. Democracy can be formal or substantive; it can be representative or direct ; and the idea can be understood as applying only to politics ,or it can be to economics and culture(education included ) as well.

Substantive democracy in South Africa is very limited however. There is nothing to guarantee that the people who are elected into positions of power will act in the interest of the previously disadvantaged poor majority. DuBois (2001) argues that democracy does not mean freedom. On the contrary it means coercion. It means submission of the individual will to the general will and it is justified in this compulsion only if the will is general and not the will of special privileges. This makes sense in trying also to understand the intricacies of how we came first of all to the very democracy in South Africa and in higher education. The people fought struggles lives were lost in the quest for freedom and democracy.

The reality is that followed in the neo-apartheid era are hardships and poverty for the majority of black South Africans. In our situation at UKZN, it is still fresh in our memory when the late Sphiwe Lawrence Zuma (SASCO) led and lobbied workers and students in support of the appointment of Professor Malegapuru Makgoba. Students took to the streets and they were heard.

It is therefore easy to conclude like Machiavelli that this follows a 'common' and 'natural' 'necessity': "*a prince is always compelled to injure those who have made him the new ruler, subjecting them troops and imposing endless other hardships which his new conquest entails*" (Machiavelli). Sphiwe Zuma should be turning in his grave when looking at the hardships that the poor students are faced with in a merged institution. Equally Solomon Mahlangu is turning in his grave when he sees the hardships of the majority of poor black South Africans.

#### **4.1.3 Neo-liberalism**

It is striking how rapidly the first post-apartheid government, elected in April 1994 and dominated by the African National Congress (ANC), has moved to adopt a neo-liberal policy framework. Since 1994, a series of shifts in the direction of the free market model-privatisation, budget cuts and fiscal austerity, economic liberalisation and labour market flexibility have taken place, culminating in the 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme (GEAR), which spelled out its intentions for higher education quite clearly. On the one hand, there was, GEAR argued, a "need to contain expenditure

through reductions in subsidisation”; on the other, there must be "greater private sector involvement in higher education.

#### **4.1.4 Nature and the character of Higher Education Institutions Transformation**

Van der Waldt (2004) argues that mergers, rationalisation, cost-efficiency, and outsourcing have become the terms defining the transformation of the universities in post-apartheid South Africa. For all their sound and fury, recent debates on the changing institutional landscape of post-apartheid universities have been deafeningly silent about the fate of university workers- academics, administrative staff and support service workers and *above all students*. Yet it is these workers and *students*, these ordinary people, who have borne the brunt of the neo-liberal restructuring of the sector. At the same time, the emerging model of the post-apartheid universities - lean, mean, and cost-conscious- has begun to commodify higher education, making education a commodity affordable only by the more affluent.

#### **4.1.5 Learning from Machiavellian Africa (Demon-crazy)**

*“After 1990 as the economy stagnated, and led by Bernard Chidzero, the Zimbabwean ruling elites, without any democratic consultation, adopted this neo-liberal agenda, which it christened the Economic Structural Adjustment Program. ESAP was supposed to bring prosperity within five years. Mugabe was lauded in the West as a statesman and given all sorts of awards.*

*Under this growing crisis, the middle classes and sections of the working class began to stir, as shown by the increasing strikes and demonstrations by professional groups like teachers, nurses and doctors from the mid-1990s onwards and the university students from earlier on. As long as these remained isolated struggles, the regime and the ruling classes remained relatively safe. But their actions pointed to the future, and clearly things could not remain the same for long. The growing economic crisis and poverty were radicalizing ever increasing numbers of the working masses despite the efforts of the labor bureaucracy to keep them down under the de*

*facto social contract. Things were bound to explode sooner or later, as shown by the December 1995 riots in Harare against police brutality. And explode they did, starting in 1996, setting the working-class movement on an unprecedented path of development". (Gwisai, 2002)*

It took more than a decade for Zimbabwean students to act. Whilst it is true that Mugabe's regime did not neglect education, hence a possibility of the lack of education specific grievances by the student movement never materialised. The student movement of that country failed to play a critical role in promoting social and political change involved in conscious-raising activities to create a groundswell of opposition to government policies and build 'a strong civic orientations' by fostering links between community organizations and students. This has contributed towards the crisis of that country and perhaps to most of the Third World (South Africa included).

#### **4.2.1 Making Demands on the State**

Throughout the 1960's and the 1970's students and the poor people of South Africa have waged struggles against the state over demands of free franchise, equality before the law and freedom from oppression to a point of loosing their lives. *"You are either 'alive or proud', or you are 'dead', and when you are 'dead', you can't care anyway. And your method of death can itself be a politicizing thing. So you die in riots"* (Biko: 1978).

It is the state that approved of a self imposed structural government policy of GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution). GEAR's main objectives are to create 1) a competitive and fast-growing economy which creates enough jobs for all work-seekers; 2) a redistribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor; 3) a society in which sound health, education and other services are available to all.

Despite all the targets in place, between 1996 to 1998 virtually all GEAR's targets were missed. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth fell from 3.2% to 1.7 to 0.1% in

96/97/98 instead of the GEAR's strategy's projection of 3.5, 2.9 and 3.8 growth. Secondly, job losses in the formal sector were 7100, 12600 and 18600 of GEAR's anticipated employment gains of 12600, 25200, and 24600 respectively between 1996 to 1998 (Bond, 2000). The rate of increase in the private sector investment fell from 6.1 to 3.1 to negative 0.7% in 1996/7/8 instead of rising from 9.3, 9.1 and 9.3% (Bond:2000). Virtually all Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was related to purchase of the existing assets through privatization, merger and acquisition deals (particularly the 30% of Telkoms sales) as opposed to creating new plants and new employment opportunities. South African outflow of FDI's was \$ 2.3 billion in 1997 were higher than the inflow which was 1.7 billion that year. Savings also fell from 18% of GDP in '96 to 15% in '97 and 14% in '98. Private savings fell from 20% in 1996 to 17% in 1998 instead of rising to 21% as GEAR projected. The current account deficit worsened from 1.3% in 1996 to 2.1% in 1998 whilst exports were steadily rising in 1997-8.

#### **GEAR and Higher Education (Merger Processes)**

This monster has cost for example to cutting backs in student enrolment at UKZN (Science Foundation and Humanities Foundation Courses), and the Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs) have seen their income from the State fall - Wits University's funding, for example, fell by almost a third from 1995 to 2000 - and have become bent on transforming themselves into market universities, raising additional income by focussing on fee-paying students, on expanding course offerings, and on contract-based research. The increase in student numbers through expanded course offerings - by distance education, by night classes, by short courses- has been a stricter recovery of student fees, shifting the student profile away from poorer working class, mainly African, students towards middle-class learners. Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) have struggled, on the whole, to simply survive: with a general trend to falling student numbers, a poorer student body, and little to market, they have focussed on demanding more government support (Van DerWalt, 2004).

It is against the backdrop of this HDI crisis - and of the drive to further reduce funding to the universities - that the State has refused to increase funding, choosing instead, from

2002 onwards, to stress the need to reduce the number of universities and technikons from 36 to 21 through mergers and closures. And it is against the backdrop of the restructuring of the sector that working conditions and job security at all the universities has worsened coupled with (*Fee increments, bursary cuts, financial exclusions, unrealistic racist academic standards meant to cut the number of students down*) - a process bound to accelerate with the mergers. (Van DerWalt: 2004)

It is clear that the whole sector in higher education is affected by GEAR and that the state is on the side of the capitalists, for those reasons it is important to carry out a counter – hegemonic activities not in isolation but in relation to a strong movement or alliance of movements. Reflecting, on the past ten year student movement and its leadership did not advance a revolutionary democracy, which does not believe in capitalism. They agree and believe that capitalism has contributed to the suffering of the people but they do not believe or take as their task and mandate to destroy capitalism [*in higher education*] (SASCO Discussion Document, 1993). Partially because of the dialectical relationship that members of SASCO are members of the ANC and SACP. This has led to the failure of the dominant student movement to take head on the ANC led government and oppose its neoliberal education policies; leading to their inappropriate form of struggles which does not benefit the poor students of this country and the working class as alluded earlier.

Mayo (1999) argues that when Gramsci saw the demise of the movement, he formulated the concept of the historic block which implies engagement in a concerted counter-hegemonic effort on all front. It is an effort that entails the numerous social groups or movements fighting for social justice. He advocated efforts, and I would include here adult education initiatives, *higher education initiatives*, which have to be carried out in the context of an alliance between industrial working class and the peasants.

Gramsci further developed the concepts war of position and war manoeuvre. Overthrowing a capitalist state by outmanoeuvring its armed forces in a military way is what Gramsci termed a war of manoeuvre. But Gramsci urges revolutionaries to engage in a war of position for the short term, during non-revolutionary times. The war of position means that radical forces are constantly trying to transform the state and the

condition of society into what they want. Struggles for the state to take of peoples basic needs, such as public housing ,education, higher education included, and health care, should be seen as battles for good life (Kaufman:2003).

### **Understanding the Neoliberal State in Education**

The state works as a mechanism for guaranteeing capitalist accumulation by providing stable condition for capitalist investment. It does this through the legal system, which enforces contracts and passes laws that makes business possible [GEAR as an economic policy] (Kaufman, 2003). Kaufman further argues that police and military play important roles by maintaining the social conditions for appropriation; both domestically and in other countries. The state is also important director investor in business such as the arms trade e.g. Billion dollars arms deal in between South Africa and France. Mind that no so large amount has been invested in educating South African population.

There is an interesting contradiction in a capitalistic state. On the one hand the state does an enormous amount of work for capitalist class by developing an educated and prepared labour force in the public school system. On the other hand , much of the impetus for public schools has come from working class people and *students* demanding access to a free education system (Kaufman:2003). This is a similar situation in South Africa, the country has 13 million illiterate people and there is on the contrary a need for a massive programme of opening the doors of learning to everyone this means free education and transformed curricula that will assist every learner to reach his/ her full potential. Any cutbacks inevitably assume a racist character as our Apartheid history racialised neo-liberal present disproportionately reduces the chance of prospective African students to have money and top school marks (Van Der Walt: 2004).

Kaufman (2003) further argues that there is a struggle over the purpose of education. On one side are those who want to justify education spending on the ground that it is good for the economy- that is, that we need good schools because we need a trained work force. On the other hand are humanist who see education as good for human development and want to see money spent on education so that people can have better lives. This humanistic rhetoric is fading into the background, and many students in colleges and *any*

*institution of higher learning* at the present moment have no idea that the educational system had ever had any purpose other than job training (Kaufman, 2003:223).

### **Shifting Alliances and Targets**

In conclusion, as political landscape changes in the struggles between capital and labour, the targets that the radicals choose to focus on change as well (Kaufman, 2003). This has not been the case with the student movement in South Africa and with the labour movement. They have maintained their alliance with the ANC which the ruling party in government.

Radical elements of the movement should shift their strategies on breaking the alliances or reconfigure and redefine alliance to ensure that there is more pressure on the government and the ANC. They should engage in popular action like boycotts and make their demands heard. This can be an effective tactic. Steve Biko (1977) highlights that there was a student group that was not prepared to be thrown around all the time. They decided to flex their muscles, and of course, the whole country responded....and they now know the degree of dedication they can find in their own members when they are called to action (Biko, 1977:167).

The student leadership of today should face the state for what it is in its neoliberal nature. This on its own raises possibilities for action. To achieve this, the *student leadership and movement* must first decide to wake up and shake themselves, use their brains and stop playing stupid game of the Sleeping Beauty. Break loose from the shackles of the ANC and challenge the ANC led government and the capitalists for the benefit of the student movement, the working class and the poor in South Africa. This is on the basis that the CC approach that is referred to in the Strategic Perspective on Transformation (SPOT) of SASCO has been not been fully adhered and to a certain extent has been complimentary. Student leadership should therefore become agents of change make a difference in their communities by deconstructing these realities and simplify them in to a language and the syntax that the people understand and lead in popular actions and resistance.

### ***4.3 The role of the Revolutionary Intellectuals in Higher Education***

Revolutionary Intellectual was some one who was organically connected to the struggles of the oppressed groups and to points of struggle .However, the question arises of how one characterizes radical intellectuals who are not organically connected to these points of struggle, particularly those who remain in the academy. Rodney suggested that the increasing opening of academic position to blacks was the result of development in the black struggle and was only a concession designed to incorporate us within the structure. Student intellectuals should operate like ‘guerrilla intellectual’ – and intellectual that wages struggles in the intellectual terrain:

*“The major and the first responsibility of the intellectual is to struggle over ideas. We didn’t create the artificial distinction between mental and manual labour but it is there, and it is to be transcended by a so called progressive intellectual going out to be a manual labourer... The ‘guerrilla intellectual’ is one who is participating in this whole struggle of transformation within his own orbit.... We have to find ways of mastering knowledge from different perspective ... the petite bourgeoisie is a service class, a managerial class, with respect to ideas and administration. It is that struggle to which I am trying to refer when I use that concept of guerrilla intellectual” (Rodney).*

Walter Rodney writes ‘the purpose has been to try and reach Africans who wish to explore further the nature of their exploitation, rather than to satisfy the standards set by our oppressors and their spokesman in the academic world’ (Walter Rodney Speaks111). Africans indeed because they are the majority that bear the brunt of neoliberal policies and oppression whilst in the midst of that V.C’s of institutions of higher learning proudly support the dominant groups turning a blind eye on the realities of poor black students and the poverty of surrounding communities.

In thinking about Rodney’s elaboration of a guerrilla intellectual, it is accurate to point out that the terrain of ideas is the one of the points of struggle in social transformation and , and that revolutionary intellectuals should confront dominant knowledge regimes , tracing their linkages and their folding into their structures of domination At the same

time there is a business of theoretically developing alternative knowledge, writing of a history of the practice of thought that reflects the human, not man or Eurocentricism. (Bogues, 2003:147). And who are better of to do that than students/and student leaders who are essentially placed at the centres of knowledge production.

Bogues (2003) further argues that this becomes extraordinarily important because in our contemporary 'we do not live by bread alone, but by bread and the word- the latter playing a great role in shaping our conceptions of our life world. As we engage in labour of understanding ourselves, the guerrilla intellectual engages the praxis that shifts the dissenter's reason. For this kind of intellectual activity there are three moves. The first is locates reason firmly in the black world-a geographical move [*with all the problems that has been brought by neoliberal South Africa*]. The second seeks to understand the categories and thoughts of the women and men who once stood outside then bounds of reason [*possibly those that were intelligent enough to realise that the struggle is not over, by removing the apartheid education system and replacing it with a harsher market driven higher education and public education systems*]. Bogues argues that this second move of guerrilla intellectual is a useful place to begin. The third is critical. The radical intellectual should also attempt to reposition the location of theory. The opposition theory and practise are the one which students and student leadership should engage in the process of making significant change and revolution in their struggle since revolution is a complex rupture primarily rooted in local conditions. In this regard revolutionary theory has to be developed in conjunction with making a revolution.

Due to agility of oppression, brutality continues take shape on the multiplicity of fronts and numerous cases point to its ability to employ a variety of disciplines ranging from religion, business, and history in order to legitimize the cyclical subjection of a particular sect of humanity. It must thus become the duty of those engaged in scholarship, leadership, and intellectuals in the makings within institutions of higher learning to reinterrogate their chosen fields of inquiry, study and vocation to exploit and uproot the current regimes of truth which continue to hold captive the minds of a mass of people in a state of false consciousness. This is done whilst one is studying and a student.

Given the robust history of student movement and the significant impact it made in making history of higher education institutions and their respective alumni on the global context, it is unquestionable the validity and relevancy of matriculation. However, the current circumstances of ‘coperatized’ student leaders and movement in the education system, it is prudent now more than ever to begin to examine the issues of relativism as it relates to the questioning of current state of affairs in student leadership..

Lastly, it is a noble course to critique the present party allegiance based on the policy that the ruling party once stood for. Student leadership of UKZN should base their argument on solid policy documents of the ANC, like the Freedom Charter as it was a covenant by people for people. As a document that expressed the ‘past yearning of our forefathers for freedom from want, equality of opportunity, for education and the right to a meaningful life’<sup>14</sup>. This should be used against the background that education needs to be a central task of the political system, and political power should help, not only by funding it, but by prioritizing the poor (in the education system), so that their opportunities are broadened. It is highly disappointing that at the time of writing the thesis less than 20 percent of student leaders had read the racism report by Prof Africa and that it had not been subjected to robust debates and interpretation which is at the essence of any revolutionary movement. This is inter alia evidence of the death of the critique element of the student movement at this UKZN which has led to it becoming somewhat reactionary than being proactive in issues embedded in their own discourse.

This might be alluded to allegiance pledged to the ruling party and the public pledge by the Vice Chancellor of the institution in supporting the ruling party. This has therefore led to student leadership being at comfort zones and not being vigilant of issues affecting them in a sense that their party allegiance at that of the management of the institution will automatically lead to everything being decided or done to their favor, which has not been the case and will most likely never be the case. What bears testimony to the above is the

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<sup>14</sup> Charter is a map that is our legacy *Sowetan Newspaper*, Friday June 24 2005

Standardized Institutional Statute where the student movement all over the country failed to influence the DOE with regards their role which is somewhat minimized and limited by the statute stipulating that SRC's shall be elected through faculty councils. This was a rude awakening to the student movement as a whole when they had anticipated the statute to recognize organizations in contesting SRC' elections, which are the only recognized structures by institutions that are used by the student movement to influence decisions in universities.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The student movement and student intelligentsia should and must be reattached to their precise social environment and be described within their specific institutions and organizations. That is to fit in within a perspective that 'higher education institutions as a microcosm of the larger society ...that the strains of transformation is fought out between contending forces within institutions and with students playing a crucial role as change agents using their knowledge to articulate views about a more just society' (Nkomo 1984 and Badat 1999).

The fact that student leadership does not necessary engages on issues that matters most leaves a lot to be desired. Further complicating the their task as leaders, student leadership do not read their documents of importance like for example the Audit Report conducted by Professor Hugh Africa at UKZN. This leads to empty leaders that lack information about matters that affect them most. Consequently, the SRC's members are not always fully prepared for the responsibilities they need to take and tasks they have to perform.

They should take Audit of themselves and check as to whether they are doing the right work for total transformation. 'Human beings have the potential for self-examination and contextual awareness'. And only when these are understood can one have a comprehension of the formal object under study (Mannheim [1936] 1968:46-47...). In conclusion we cannot lead when we a least informed. Have we forgotten an old maxim:

'Knowledge is power'? Only then can we become Public intellectuals- to be reattached to their precise social environment and be informed.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Brink (1991) defines sampling as the process by which the study subjects or objects are chosen from a larger population. Since this will draw from student leadership in particular, this will represent a certain percentage of the whole student population at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It is fact that if the sample does not represent the entire population, the findings from the sample cannot be generalized to the entire population. This also shall be used against the findings of Professor Hugh Africa's Audit. A purposive sample of 10 student's leaders of the pre and post-merged institution was selected among students at the Westville campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Students leaders were selected primarily because they were protagonist in the deliberations in 2003/4, the period in which tensions were raised, insecurities and intransigence were experienced. In addition, over 60% of UKZN student population participate in clubs and societies which have leadership that also participated in the merger talks (UKZN, 2004).

## **5.2 Research design**

An exploratory research design was used to identify the key factors that facilitate or hinder the merger process in UKZN, and to establish if, and to what extent students at Westville campus of UKZN and Howard College viewed the process itself. More importantly looking at the role of the SRC and its impact and penetration on the whole student body. Arkava and Lane (1983) posit that an exploratory research design is used when a poorly defined problem confronts the researcher, or when he possesses little objective information about the nature of the problem and possible factors influencing it. An exploratory research design was used because it would objectively describe the problem.

### **5.2.1 Limitation of the method**

The advantage of purposive sampling is that it is cheaper (de Vaus, 2002) and facilitates reaching the target sample quickly (Schonlau *et al.* 2001). With purposive sampling method, one is likely to get the opinions of the target population (Trochim, 2002). On the other hand, the method's main limitation is that it is not possible generalize the results to the entire population (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; de Vaus, 2002). However, the primary concern of this study is not to generalise, but to explore. According to De Vos, (1996), an exploratory study seeks to establish facts, gather new data and determine whether there are interesting patterns in the data. Thus in this study, the representativeness of the sample is less important.

### **5.2.2 Advantages of the method**

Advantages of sampling include time, money, efficiency, and safety. If the sample of the population provides a reasonably accurate data, it is not necessary to use time and resources to study the whole population. A scientific chosen sample should give data

from which it is possible to generalise. However, the sample is biased by being limited only to student leaders and neglecting the general student populace. Taking into consideration of neutral students as well.

### **5.3 Data Collection Instrument**

The study used a questionnaire composed of structured and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was structured into four sections. Section A was made up of questions about participants' biographic information such as sex, age, race and year of entry at UKZN. Questions in Section A were aimed at obtaining information to describe the population sample in order to place the data in context. Section B was composed of questions relating to knowledge and awareness of History and Context of transformation, and the benefits of merger. Section C comprised of questions concerning participants' views about present conjuncture. This section had three main aims. The first was to ascertain if and what could have been done better by student leadership. The second aim was to examine the opinions of the respondents about merger itself with a particular focus of "Premier University of African Scholarship.

On the other hand, the disadvantage of self-administered questionnaires is that they require significant time and effort to develop and the researcher is not able to control the order in which questions are answered (Arlene and Kosecoff, 1998). At the same time, the presence of the researcher may influence the participants' responses. The decision to use self-administered questionnaires was taken after weighing its overall advantages over disadvantages.

### **5.4 Pilot Testing**

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a sample of 10 students in leadership (five from SRC's and the other five from different student organizations). The aim of a pilot-test is to ensure that respondents understand the intended meaning of the questions and that their answers are coherent (De Vaus, 2002). In addition, pilot testing helps protect for errors such as ambiguous questions and is crucial in cases where more than one cultural

group is included in the study (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). After a review of the responses to the pilot test questionnaire, it was clear that some participants misinterpreted a few questions. These questions were revised accordingly. In addition, the comments of participants in a space provided at the end of the pilot test questionnaire were taken into account. The pilot-test in this study helped improve and revise the questionnaire.

#### **5.4.1 Research protocol and ethical issues**

De Vaus (2002) stresses the importance of three ethical considerations in conducting surveys, namely: voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality. Voluntary participation requires the researcher to respect the right of individuals to agree or refuse to participate in research (De Vaus, 2002; Terre and Durrheim, 1999). It also includes the right of participants to refuse to answer any questions they find intrusive. The researcher explicitly informed the respondents that that participation was voluntary before they completed the questionnaires. None of the participants was pressurized to take part in the survey and the researcher thanked those who did not wish to participate.

The principle of informed consent requires that participants be informed about a range of matters relating to the survey including the purpose of the study, how respondents were selected, identity of the researcher, and how the information obtained would be made available (De Vaus, 2002). The researcher briefed the participants on these issues prior to completing the questionnaires. In addition, an explicit covering letter was included in the questionnaires and participants were requested to read it and ask for clarification if necessary.

The researcher was extremely cognisant of the need for confidentiality in this study. In a confidential survey, the researcher may know the identity of individual respondents but guarantees that no identifying information will be revealed to any one else (De Vaus, 2002). In adherence to confidentiality, the respondents were not required to write their names on the questionnaires. They were assured that their responses would be treated with strict confidentiality and that their names would not be recorded anywhere.

Therefore, when analysing the data, code numbers were written on the questionnaires to identify individual participants' responses to ensure confidentiality.

### **5.5 Data Analysis and interpretation**

The survey questionnaire used in this study consisted of both structured and open-ended questions. The data was analysed using a qualitative analysis. Responses to the open-ended questions were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is qualitative analysis, which involves sorting information into themes (Hayes, 2000:173). Themes, according to Hayes (2000) are the recurrent ideas or topics, which can be detected in the material being analysed and which come up on more than one occasion in a particular set of data. To facilitate thematic analysis, first the answers to the open ended questions were typed verbatim in a single *MS word* document. With all the text in one document, the researcher was able to read the data several times and to identify the recurrent themes. The emerging themes were then categorized and analysed.

The advantage of thematic analysis is that it is a useful method of exploring the depth of qualitative data; however, it is a rigorous and demanding process (Hayes, 2000).

### **5.6 Qualitative analyses of respondents views on the merger (Section A)**

**When asked on what they think is the underlying problem that makes them think that the merger is “fragile”, the following responses were obtained,**

**Respondent A**, “The merger is a top down imposed and students did not have much of any other choice but to jump onto the band wagon. However, they (we) have ourselves to blame because of not supporting those that said that this process was happening too fast. We labeled them reactionaries who are resistant to change. In my thinking the merger is fragile because, nothing was put in place as a shock absorber to ensure that this transition does not damage us a lot, but looks at what is happening”.

**Respondent B**, “The main problem is that we do not have leaders to start with. We have power mongers that enjoy the privileges of been in power. When last did we have a

student body meeting this year? We are told that things will be fine and students will register whilst we still get excluded. Yes the merger is fragile this year because even Indians are excluded and possibly the students of UKZN will come as one to fight these exclusions”.

**Respondent C**, “The last time I checked SRC’s were student representative council but now they have since become managers themselves. As a student leader myself I have never heard of a vacation executive that never even met for a meeting. They only are acting now because there are exclusions which make you think of what has become of SRC’s. They account only to their girlfriends and management. They do not inform us about the developments, the SGO’s who by their very nature of their work should account to the SRC’s account to management. It’s all a joke. I fear that Westville campus might do something but this is only going to last for a day or two and everything is going to go back to normal. Having said that, I do not rule out any possibilities of Westville students engaging into serious action in the long run. My other concern is that all these other campuses are quite but with the merger I think they might also join the Westville campus should they co-ordinate their action well. The merger is not necessarily fragile but could be if students are not taken serious”.

**Respondent D**, “the problem is not “our merger” but the whole neoliberal system. These problems are not only in our campus but in the whole country. This is evident because of this years strikes across campuses and strongly so at DIT our neighbors. Our V.C’s only deliver what has been put down on the national agenda, ‘the politics of GEAR and restructuring’. As it is with the labor movement so shall it be with the student movement. GEAR is the problem and so are these mergers. They exclude students and in the country there has been increasing levels of unemployment within the youth constituency which makes matters worse”.

**Respondent E**, “I really do not see much of the problem with the merger. The only thing is that there are no more vibrant student politics. There is nothing to fear everything shall be put in place and merger shall continue as planned by the managers and Department of

Education. This is because there are no strong links between student leadership nationally which was evident at the document of the Standard Institutional Statute of 2002 (Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997) which informed these mergers. It is a quite document for a quite student populace. Things have changed”.

**Respondent F**, “I just do not know much, I only got into these politics last year November and I am still trying to grapple with these issues. I know that there has been a tremendous progress made by our predecessors with regard to the merger and we only can work to defend their hard work. Furthermore, it is important to equalize resources on both campuses and to merge the health science faculty. To me it makes no sense to have medical school functioning independent from other health sciences. I wonder what informs that but I have a feeling that academics are very much intransigent to this merger whilst we are taught of the multi-disciplinary holistic approach to health care and yet we are taught at distant campuses. It would be ideal also to have a bridge for those who are doing B. Med to have an automatic entrance to medical school should they wish to do so. The inconsistency of failing to harmonize the curriculum frustrates students who are of the view that we are one institution. Possibly on that note the merger is fragile because it really frustrates students who really had high hopes to achieve their dreams but refused entry to medical school even at post graduate level this shows that the issue of standards is still a problem where the former Natal looks down upon graduates from the former UDW. Until this problem is resolved, we have not merged”.

**Respondent G**, “There was failure student leadership, particularly the SRC”S to coalesce the merger process with the transformation agenda so as to impact on the curricula review and to bring on board the entire student body. There is no revolution that starts from top. It is exactly like Mugabe’s land grab project and expecting a buy in from the people. This whole process is fragile and it needs examination from time to time. It is an elite transition to benefit a few in along run. We cannot only blame the students but also the technocrats of these mergers, the principals who bowed down to the government pressure and accepted this. For them, their jobs were guaranteed, their children-Free Higher Education but for us financial and academic exclusions. There has been the lack

of understanding about the policies of these mergers from the onset. Even when we expressed discontent and disillusionment with our participation in the policy and institutional governance issues, we were not taken seriously. What happened to Umhlanga Resolutions? Did any member of management bother to read them, if they did; I assure we would not be having such problems. This to me says this process is very fragile”.

**Respondent H**, “This has just been a take over not a merger. Everything is set according to former natal standards from FAB to academics. There has never been a consideration of what was good at the former Westville campus. Everything has changed and we are saying nothing. I am only concern about those that used to benefit from HBI’s for instance there were no high matric points entry requirement. Secondly, the numbers of those that used to get into Outward Bound program and other foundation programs has since decreased. I am a mentor and a senior student and a former student leader. In former Westville, the intake of Humanities Foundation Program would be +- 2000 students but this year (2005) the intake is less than 600 students across five campuses of UKZN. What does that say to you? This merger is bad for ‘Africans’, it does not benefit us at all”.

**Respondent I**, “The merger is good, it has not affected us that much nonetheless it needs to be well managed to prevent the problems that we had at the beginning of the year. The lack of funding is a national question NSFAS and the Minister should come up with solutions before this becomes a national insurrection. As a member of SASCO, I still maintain that ‘**THERE SHOULD BE FREE EDUCATION FOR ALL**’, the ruling party knows that and I still stand by that. Yes, this also has some serious bearing onto us because we seem to be quite about this yet our comrades fought so hard for this. Whether we like it or not there is an emergence of the new social movements who seem to be singing this song and who are against commodification of education which comes along with these mergers. Our merger has been so far smooth but it is not immune to national questions. Student leadership had tried to bring us together for a common good and it is up to us to make it work. It has to work but that does not mean that we won’t have

problems. I do not see the merger being fragile but a policy that informs it is not student friendly, which is the problem”.

**Respondent J**, “the Universities are State institutions and they should be seen contributing towards nation building, consolidating democracy and promote student’s welfare. These mergers are as a result of serious consideration by government and academics of what are their implications. Students are just recipients of the product of what have been long decided by the powers that be. Nonetheless they have the power to agree to or not to agree with these decisions. The question is on what basis? Since 1994 student movement has no ideological inclination. This does not at all assume that students are homogenous and in unison in their issues. This is the problem that they had no theoretical critic of this transition which in their mind believed that all shall be well. These mergers present the current student leadership with an enormous challenge. An ideological challenge and further define themselves as student leadership and a student movement. So far they are just playing according to the rules of the masters and hence such a pleasant relationship with their principals. These mergers and this one in particular should be careful of the managerism as a dominant style of leadership. This reinforces the top down leadership. This is in relation to the role of SGO’s who seem to manage or contain the student leadership because of their penetration to influential university officials and camouflage with comradeship”.

**Part Two: This Section focused on student organizations as they exist on Campus**

**Section B.**

**1. In your view, what do you think were the challenges that are facing student leadership post 1994?**

**Respondent A:** Our organization stands in the principle of God and Good governance. We are confident that God is going to lead us onto understanding the challenges that are facing students today as they face the society. We got our democracy in 1994 and we should make it work on campus, society and the world.

**Respondent B:** Since 1991 SASCO has been in the forefront of the struggle for advancement of student interests in the Higher Education sector. Over years we have participated in shaping the landscape of the South African Higher education system. SASCO is the only organization that submitted a comprehensive policy input to the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) policy process that eventually led to the adoption of Higher education & Further Education and Training Act.

We were involved in policy debates around the report on the Size and shape of the Higher Education sector led by the council on Higher education (CHE). We also compiled responses to these report, thus ensuring our slogan: 'from ivory towers to people's institutions' remains a total summation of our strategic objective in transforming the higher education system. We are up to today's challenges.

**Respondent C:** We were formed and launched around 2001 but our house has never been in order. A year ago, Sadesmo, called on the party (IFP) to have a clear succession policy but these have felt on deaf year in our mother body. Honestly, until we get support from our mother body and until we get our house in order, it is only then that I think we will be ready to face student's challenges of the post 1994 era.

**Respondent D:** we are an issue based organization that is why we have an alliance with SASCO here on campus. Nationally we believe that SASCO is still an organization that has a potential of representing students on fundamental educational issues.

**Respondent E:** We are strategically located within the Progressive Youth Alliance on campuses and in government as led by the ANC.

We are committed on the following issues:

Education and Training Expand and improve the quality of basic education.

- Skills training

- Higher education transformation
- Promote adult basic education and Early childhood education programmes

**Respondent F:** things have changed since 1994. We need to clearly organise ourselves because of the following reasons:

- the difficulty of sustaining struggles based on very localised issues,
- The lack of political (ideological) and organizational flexibility in being able to provide direction to a range of student's initiative.
- The limited understanding of the functioning of the neo-liberal state.

Therefore, the challenge is far bigger than we think, there decline of student activism in the past decade leaves much to be desired. The erosion of a collective student identity is a serious crisis whilst we have a space to can congregate and organize ourselves.

## **2. What remedies do you suggest to be put in place to correct this?**

**Respondent A:** Let God's people lead

**Respondent B:** We are open to change, dialogue and robust debates as an organization. If there is a need for new remedies let the people talk and issues shall be debated.

**Respondent C:** Let the bread and butter issues come first (meaning issues that affect us locally be addressed) and all the rest shall follow. I issues like affordable accommodation, disability issues, gender and the basic student services.

**Respondent D:** Put student's first and maybe party politics later. This has got a bearing in all students' formations not only our own organization.

**Respondent E:** We are clearly guided by our party's mandate as the Youth League, and further we are delivering within our alliance the PYA on all student, and campus based issues.

**Respondent F:** An ideology that will help us understand the functioning of a neo-liberal state and that which is going to help us challenge the ruling classes.

**3. Why do you think SASCO is not broadly representing students and in your thing do you suggest a formation that will be representative of all?**

**Respondent A:** They have turned Student Governance into a rapist haven, brothel and spaza shop. Whatever you think of as rubbish belongs to SASCO.

**Respondent B:** SASCO does represent student at all level, both locally and also nationally. Nonetheless, it is true that we need to audit ourselves as an organization and check if we are still relevant within the current political climate. That can only be done in our Annual General Congress and then changes shall be seen unfolding.

**Respondent C:** SASCO is the only relevant organization on student matters as I said it is our ally and we maintain that it articulates student issues nationally.

**Respondent D:** Avoid part politics and put students first. You cannot bite the hand that feeds you. If SASCO should lead, it should move away from the politics of the ANC and SACP.

**Respondent E:** We will continue to lead as the PYA and represent students.

**Respondent F:** A new revolutionary student organization.

**The other for did not return the questionnaires**

**4. In your view, what kind of relations exists between student leadership and management?**

**Respondent A:** It is a good relationship because we get a lot of assistance from management.

**Respondent B:** It is quite a working relationship because sometimes we agree to differ but we do get the job done. The merger came with its problems but we managed under difficult circumstances to come to terms with it. We still do have problems with members of the management but also we need to recognize them as managers and let them manage.

**Respondent C:** I still have problems with management; I think they dominate our leadership. We are still faced with the same problems that we face every year. They (management) do not keep their word. If you remember during negotiations, they said that the merger will not affect pipeline students, but look at what is happening now. Students are moved from pillar to post and are met by hostile professors who do not consider our backgrounds. If I should say this: The Management of UKZN needs to CHANGE and TRANSFORM. Furthermore, they are corrupting the student leaders and make them sell out on their mandate.

**Respondent D:** Management has always been management. As for us from Westville campus, we feel like our leadership that we have been betrayed by management of UKZN. In all that we agreed upon the management has since somersaulted. We cannot trust them but we should make them to understand that we shall retaliate if needs be to their unfriendly policies.

**Respondent E:** Honestly, we have been betrayed by this management. Our organization from Westville feel that indeed this has been a take over of our vibrant campus and been swallowed up into a white super culture of the former Natal. This management just copied and pasted all the rules and regulations from the former Natal and implemented

them here. The relationship with our deployed comrades in the SRC and management is to seek the beat for the student but it still remains to be seen, what will happen.

**Respondent F:** How can you bite the hand that feeds you?

**The other four respondents did not return the questionnaires**

Thanks for your cooperation.

### **Section C.**

Only 10 percent of the entire student leadership read the Professor Hugh Africa report. And based on that a conclusion was made that student leadership is concerned with other things not what affect the entire student populace. The question is: Based on Prof Africa's report what actions did the student leadership take to ensure that such ills as exposed by the report are not repeated? What was the commitment of management to those proposals?

### **Conclusion**

Reconfiguring of the self.

There is a deep yearning within student leadership of reconfiguring of the self. In fact honestly as I see it is the question of blackness and poverty and thinking beyond "*blacknessness*". What also comes out clearly is the lack of leaders who are visionaries, dreamers who would expound philosophies and champion them continuously.

Secondly, there is a need for leadership in the terrain of ideas which is a serious shortfall in the struggle for a better society today. There is a strong feeling that student leadership and leaders of tomorrow need to start on a clean slate of new ideas and teach them how to survive as revolutionary intellectuals. As a starting point, a need to disengage with the present values of sickening materialism, party allegiances which lead to imbecility of the youth and student movement (A tabula rasa).

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, lessons that could be learnt in the process of transformation relate to the nature and the character of the whole process. The second will be to be able as protagonist to critically engage and sustain in the battle of ideas which is a challenge to all protagonists.

Transformation can bring a lot of undesired outcomes wherein as demonstrated elites turn a blind eye on the poverty that surrounds them. Cronyism blinds people into comfort zones of party allegiances which on its own defeat the purpose of academic independence. Student movements turned into tokens of the ruling party who defend without understanding the policies of the dominant party, rubberstamps every decision without interrogation shall lead South Africa into a culture of 'yes man' and spokespersons of the neo-colonizers.

The state of affairs provides an opportunity for exploration in the terrain of ideas in search of the objective truth. It is accurate to point out that the terrain of ideas is the one of the points of struggle in social transformation and, and that revolutionary intellectuals

should confront dominant knowledge regimes, tracing their linkages and their origins into their structures of domination. At the same time there is a business of theoretically developing alternative knowledge, writing of a history of the practice of thought that reflects the human beings.

**In the battle of ideas we may learn from Karl Popper as the University community and as student leaders:**

*But for certain truth, no man has known it  
Nor will he know it; neither of the gods,  
Nor yet of all the things of which I speak  
And even if by chance he were to utter  
The perfect truth, he would find himself not to know it:  
For all is but a woven web of guesses.*

*Xenophanes quoted by (Popper, K: 1996)*

## **6.1 Conclusion**

According to Karl Popper (1996:194) these six lines contain more than a theory of uncertainty of human knowledge. They contain a theory of objective knowledge<sup>15</sup>. For Xenophanes tells us here that, whilst something I say may be true, neither I nor anybody else will know that it is true. This means, however, that the truth is objective: truth is the correspondence of what I say with the facts; whether or not I actually know that the correspondence exists.

In addition to these six lines according to Popper (1996:194) contain another very important theory. They contain a clue to the difference between objective truth and the subjective certainty of knowledge. For the six lines affirm that, even when I proclaim the

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<sup>15</sup> Popper, K (1996) *In Search of a Better World* Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc, New York, N.Y 10001

most perfect truth, I cannot know this with certainty. For there is no infallible criterion of truth: we can never or almost never be quite sure that we have not been mistaken.

But Xenophanes was not an “epistemological pessimist”<sup>16</sup>. He was a searcher; and during the course of his life he was able, by way of critical re-examination, to improve many of his conjectures, and more especially his scientific theories. These are his words:

The gods did not reveal, from the beginning,  
All things to us, but in the course of time,  
Through seeking, we may learn, and know things better.

According to Popper (1996:194) Xenophanes also explains what he means by ‘to know things better’. He means the approximation to the objective truth: closeness to the truth, similarity to the truth. For he says in his conjectures:

These things, we may conjecture, resemble the truth.

In Xenophanes, theory of truth and of human knowledge we may find the following points:

1. Our knowledge consist of statements
2. Statements are either true or false.
3. Truth is objective. It is the correspondence of the content of a statement with the facts.
4. Even when we express the most perfect truth, we cannot know this- that is we cannot know it with certainty.
5. Since ‘knowledge’ in a usual sense of the word is ‘certain knowledge’, there can be no knowledge. There can only be conjectural knowledge: ‘For all is but a woven web of guesses’.
6. But in our conjectural knowledge there can be progress to something better.
7. Better knowledge is better approximation to the truth.
8. But it always remains a conjectural knowledge.

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<sup>16</sup> Popper,K (1996) *In Search Of A Better World* ,routledge.Chapmanand Hall,Inc, New York, N.Y, 10001

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations which might be useful to the University communities at large are advanced:

### **6.2.1 Equal opportunity and equal access to higher education**

The struggle against poverty, education for all, and the awareness of needs and the increase in demand - have led to very doubtful development of our democracy. The idea still stands.

### **6.2.2 Knowledge attained should be transfer to society**

This also should not produce impecunious student who would see the struggle for knowledge as an adventure, demanding self-denial and sacrifice, which shall give the knowledge attained a unique value. I am afraid that this attitude is on the wane.

### **6.2.3 There should be independent critical thinking from student leadership**

Student leadership should guard and be vigilant not to fall into a neo liberal adaptation to forms of dominations, becoming acquiescent, if involuntary, participants in their own subjugation (critically engaging the merger and its consequences to the entire student populace). Theirs is to really show how educations, supposedly the means par excellence of social mobility has instead reproduced social inequality. 'Central to this process is the way in which inequalities of wealth and incomes appear in society to be not so much the products of economic injustice, as the natural consequence disparities of ability, judgments or lifestyle'<sup>17</sup>. They should help in deconstructing the theories of the existing realities that confront them and act.

### **6.2.4 'Voice of the Voiceless'**

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<sup>17</sup> Wolfreys ,J *PierreBourdieu: voice of resistance* Spring 2002:98-101

Student leadership's mission should be to speak for those who have no voice and whose voice has been silenced (by the draconian university policy e.g. the student who was nearly expelled at Howard College). The leadership's ultimate goal should be to form the mind and the character of new generations which is essential in the face of extermination of the revolutionary generation of student leadership (depoliticized).

### **6.2.5 Ethical principles of fallibility, rational discussion, approximation should prevail**

For the entire university community, there can be some lessons to be learnt from Karl Popper (1994:199) ethical principles:

- The principle of fallibility: perhaps I am wrong and perhaps you are right, but we could easily both wrong.
- The principle of rational discussion: we want to try, as impersonally as possible, to weigh up reasons for and against a theory: a theory that is definite and critizable.
- The principle of approximation to the truth: we can nearly always come closer to the truth in a discussion which avoids personal attacks. It can help us to achieve a better understanding, even in those cases where we not reach an agreement.

These principles according to Popper (1994:199) imply among other things, toleration: if I hope to learn from you and if I want to learn from you in the interest of the truth, then I have not only to tolerate you but also to recognize you as a potential equal, the potential unity and equality of all men somehow constitute a prerequisite of our willingness to discuss matters rationally. Of importance also is the principle that we can learn much from a discussion, even when it does not lead to agreement: a discussion can help us by shedding light upon some of our errors.

### **6.2.6 Class Suicide**

(Mayo: 1999) argues that dealing with academics as agents of social of change, or, transformative intellectuals, (Freire quoted by Mayo) places the emphasis not only on teaching but also on something akin to an organic relationship, in Gramscian sense of the

term, between educators and the class or group of people they are dealing with, using such words as 'growing' and 'in communion' with the group. According to Freirean conception of the relationship between the educator and the educatee, difference between the educators and the learners has to be mitigated as far as possible. Freire is in no doubt aware that educators can bring into the teaching situation a cultural capital which is at odds with that of the learners and that this can constitute a powerful force of domestication. Freire argues about the possibility of intellectuals – and one can include educators/ academics among them- committing class suicide to integrate themselves with the masses, immersing themselves in the culture, history, aspirations, doubts, anxieties and fears of the popular classes. The exercise on its own marks the beginning of the intellectual foundation of confronting the realities faced by students.

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