

*CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATIC
INCLUSION AND
CONTESTATION OF SPACE:
CONTEMPORARY STUDENT
ACTIVISM IN TRANSFORMING
SOUTH AFRICA*

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Motivation for Research



#FeesMustFall

“We were primed to be the generation that enjoyed the fruits of democracy...here we are, angry that the fruit tastes bittersweet.”

Chikane 2018



“The establishment and maintenance of coloniality in higher education in historically White universities and the Apartheid legacy of under-resourced historically Black universities makes the university a microcosm of a broader colonial SA.”

(Xaba 2017: 100)



Democratic Deficit

“Democracy-building is an **ongoing process of struggle and contestation** rather than the adoption of a standard recipe of institutional designs. Democracy building work for the next century involves going beyond current formulations to find and promote those new and emerging visions and movements for democracy which will **extend and deepen its meanings and practices towards full citizen engagement** yet further.”

(Gaventa 2006: 8)



Activists' Voices



- “We do not live in a post-apartheid society. We live in a post-apartheid apartheid. A cosmetic apartheid...I can't help but ask, how free was I really born?”
- “I think our democracy is like a cartoon of a man saying *You are as free as you want to be. Go do whatever you want!* But in the background, they're really running the whole show and you're just the puppets.”
- “I don't vote anymore...t's all fucking noodles!!”
- “Young people would rather speak out on Twitter than on ballots.”
- “It seemed like resorting to burning the library was the only way to get them to listen.”

*“To build
the nation,
we must
break the
rainbow.”*

(Chikane, 2018)



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