Research article

The *Kgotla* as a Spatial Mediator on South African University Campuses

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Abstract

Higher education in South Africa is experiencing a time of accelerated change, increasing complexity, contested knowledge claims and inevitable uncertainty. Academia, and by proxy the place which accommodates the academic function, stand central to this debate. The need for a decolonised curriculum on the African continent dates back to the inauguration of the Association of African Universities (AAU) in 1967. The AAU called for the adherence to world academic standards in the service of Africa and its people. The #FeesMustFall (#FMF) movement placed renewed prominence on the necessity of a curriculum that includes Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). In spatial terms, the Kgotla *forms part of the IKS. The* Kgotla *represents both a meaningful place and a system of communication. The spatial construct surrounding the #FMF movement lacks interrogation and debate. This article highlights the requirement of a meaningful place on South African university campuses where different voices can be heard. The importance of place is analysed at the hand of two #FMF events. Firstly, the Principal of the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) sitting down to meet with disgruntled students. Secondly, the President of South Africa leaving protestors in wait on the southern terrace of the Union Buildings. This article concludes by stating the need for a place on South African university campuses to address the complex issues facing not only students but society at large.*

Space and Place

The seminal publication by Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), *Space and place – the perspective of experience* explores how individuals feel and think about place and space. Tuan (1977) suggests that place is security and space is freedom, and that humankind is attached to the one (place) while longing for the other (freedom). Similarly, Heidegger (1971) distinguishes between building and dwelling, where 'building' serves as a means to support humankind's 'dwelling'.

Temple (2018, p. 133) emphasises the intimate relationship between "the physical form of a higher education institution and its effectiveness as a site for teaching, learning, scholarship and research". Temple states that the connection needs to be interrogated using the concepts of space and place.

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Developing the term a "placeful" university, Nørgård and Bengtsen (2016, p. 5) argue that "universities must offer spaces where citizenship can develop and let academics dwell". Nørgård and Bengtsen (2016, p. 6) state that a university only becomes meaningful once it is more than a space where access to knowledge and education is provided.

According to Nørgård and Bengtsen (2016, p. 6), "campus areas and buildings, are central sites that can or cannot invite dwelling within education. As such, architects and designers of academic space, as well as stakeholders, decision-makers and front runners of that space, must safeguard that the university as spatial layout promotes academic virtues, place-making and dwelling." In the context of South African higher education, this responsibility is largely ignored by designers and decision makers.

Pertinent Historical Aspects of Education in Africa

A former President of South Africa, the Hon. Thabo Mbeki, expressed the vision of a developmental university for Africa embracing of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) (Mbeki, 2006). This idea needs to be put in context by referring to pertinent historical events.

The Freedom Charter of the Congress of the People was adopted at Kliptown, Johannesburg on 25 and 26 June 1955. Under the heading, 'The Doors of Learning and of Culture shall be Opened!', the Freedom Charter states:

> … Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;

> Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit …   (Congress of the People, 1955)

The Freedom Charter should be regarded within contextual developments on the African continent. On 3 February 1960, Harold Macmillian (then the U.K. Prime Minister) addressed the South African Parliament, repeating an earlier address made in Accra, Ghana, on 10 January 1960 (Salazar & Syndercombe, 2011). Macmillian had spent approximately a month in Africa touring the then British Colonies and Protectorates. This historically significant address signalled the U.K. Government's position on African independence. Macmillan said:

> The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact.
>   (Salazar & Syndercombe, 2011, p. 39)

Macmillian also made an apparent reference to Apartheid policy, stating:

> As a fellow member of the Commonwealth it is our earnest desire to give South Africa our support and encouragement, but I hope you won't mind my saying frankly that there are some aspects of your policies which make it impossible for us to do this without being false to our own deep convictions about the political destinies of free men to which in our own territories we are trying to give effect.   (Salazar & Syndercombe, 2011, p. 34)

Various other European states shared the British approach to the independence of African countries. During this time, independence from colonial powers made a significant contribution to the emerging 'development' discourse. According to Cloete and Maassen (2015, p. 7), 1960 was "heralded as the 'Year of Africa' and the beginning of the so-called 'development decade'" for the African continent. 1960 became an important milestone in African higher education. Within the African political arena,

> […] 17 African countries gained independence, and 13 others were to become independent states a few years later. The sudden collapse of the edifice of colonialism and emergence of the Political Kingdom triggered even greater expectations and demands, not only for the total elimination of the vestiges of foreign rule from the rest of the continent but also for the liberation of the masses of people from disease, poverty and ignorance.
>
> (Banya & Elu, 2001, p. 2)

Following the departure of the erstwhile colonial powers, it was expected that Africa's new national universities would produce a new generation of human resources addressing the actual needs of the country. The requirements of the professions and the bureaucracy were significant. "This was to redress the acute shortages in these areas as a result of the gross underdevelopment of universities during colonialism and the departure of colonial administrators following independence" (Cloete et al., 2015, p. 18).

The 'Development of Higher Education in Africa' was the theme of a UNESCO conference held during September 1962 (Cloete & Maassen, 2015, p. 7). Following this conference, and various meetings and consultations, the Association of African Universities (AAU) was formally inaugurated in Rabat in 1967 (Yesufu, 1973). Figure 1 presents the preamble to the Constitution of the AAU, stating the adherence to world academic standards in the service of Africa and its people.

We the Heads of Universities and University Institutions of Higher Education throughout the African Continent; Aware that many of the problems encountered can be solved by developing a system under which there is effective co-operation and consultation among the institutions concerned;

Conscious of the role of African Universities to maintain an adherence and loyalty to world academic standards, and to evolve over the years a pattern of higher education in the service of Africa and its peoples, yet promoting a bond of kinship to the larger human society:

Have resolved to establish a corporate body to achieve our aims and objectives in harmony with the spirit of the Organization of African Unity.

Figure 1: The preamble to the Constitution of the AAU
(Source: Yesufu, 1973, p. 81)

> It is in the light of these simple but challenging words that the Association has proceeded to identify and formulate a new philosophy of higher, particularly university, education for Africa, in the hope of evolving institutions that are not only built, owned and sited in Africa, but are of Africa, drawing their inspiration from Africa, and intelligently dedicated to her ideals and aspirations. (Yesufu, 1973, p. 82)

In July 1972, the AAU held a workshop in Accra, Ghana, focusing on the role of the African university (Cloete & Maassen, 2015, p. 7). The Accra workshop was attended by academics and various other leaders to define the African University. Yesufu (1973, p. 81) provides the following summary: "At every stage, the Workshop made constant calls and appeals to the Association of African Universities to provide effective leadership in the cause of transforming universities in Africa into truly indigenous institutions." According to Mtembu (2004, p. 284), the Accra workshop emphasised relevance, engagement, and service to Africa's environment and socioeconomic conditions and needs. Mtembu (2004, p. 284) further argues that this should be the cornerstone of African Universities.

The university on the African continent, as developed by the AAU and described during the Accra workshop, strongly aligns with Mbeki's (2006) notion of universities on the continent embracing African IKS. IKS extends to the making of a meaningful place. The importance of place-making and dwelling on university campuses is acknowledged in the works of Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), Heidegger (1971), Temple (2018) and Nørgård and Bengtsen (2016).

The spatial construct forms part of IKS, specifically in the form of the *Kgotla* that is still used in modern-day Botswana. The *Kgotla* represents both a meaningful place and a system of communication. The following section explores the *Kgotla* in more detail with the aim of juxtaposing it to recent student unrest in South Africa.

The Kgotla

In Botswana, the *Kgotla* is the traditional village meeting place, a place where one can listen and where your voice can also be heard. It serves as a space for a customary court, public meeting or community council. In essence, all issues concerning a community are brought to the *Kgotla*, where individuals are encouraged to speak openly and freely.

The central notion to the *Kgotla* is *mmualebe o a bo a bua la gagwe*, translated from Setswana as "everyone has the right to voice their opinion" (Ashworth & Ashworth, 2019). Tolerance and freedom of expression are encouraged between people with different views. The system advocates the idea that *ntwa kgolo ke ya molomo*, or "no fight should become physical; the fiercest of fights is verbal". (Ashworth & Ashworth, 2019)

The *Kgotla* consists of two distinctive components. Firstly, the democratic process and secondly, the physical place or destination.

a. Discourse in the *Kgotla*

Conflict is inevitable amongst communities. The way conflict is dealt with and subsequent reactions contribute to how the events unfold. The result could be the prevention or escalation of further conflict. Efforts to reduce possible escalation should actively be sought.

Despite its shortcomings, various scholars describe Botswana's democracy as being exemplary on the African continent (Holm, 1996; Doorenspleet, 2003; Molomo, 2003). According to the Background Note prepared by the U.S. Department of State (2007) on Botswana, "Botswana has a flourishing multiparty constitutional democracy. Each of the elections since independence has been freely and fairly contested and has been held on schedule. The country's minority groups participate freely in the political process". The Background Note further states that "[t]he roots of Botswana's democracy lie in Setswana traditions, exemplified by the Kgotla, or village council, in which the powers of traditional leaders are limited by custom and law".

The Botswana Government views the *Kgotla* system as an essential key to governance. In 2016, Frans van der Westhuizen, the then Assistant Minister of Local Government and Rural Development of Botswana stated, "The *Kgotla* continues to provide a platform for consultations on various issues such as development, governance and any other issues of national importance" (Botswana, 2016). The Ministerial statement described the *Kgotla* as "a repository for culture, customs and tradition … where important values are passed on to the younger generation" (Botswana, 2016).

On an institutional level, the *Kgotla* is vital in addressing conflict within and between communities. This institution facilitates liaison between the government and community while promoting interaction and socialisation between the community members. All forms of engagements and proceedings are based on fundamental human values of civility, respect and inclusiveness. Restorative justice is another principle practised in the *Kgotla*. In essence, parties collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of an offence and its future implications. "[T]he *Kgotla* is not forced on people. In many circumstances, the chief or jury would try to provide advice. People at conflict are often given a chance to talk to each other" (Moumakwa, 2010, p. 71). Respect for the jury during the conversation is an important part of the interaction between the respective parties. The *Kgotla* underscores democratic values, freedom of speech and expression, while open discussion in everyone's presence is facilitated (Moumakwa, 2010, p. 76-77).

A meaningful place stands central to this idea, and the term *Kgotla* defines a meeting place allowing individuals to exercise their democratic rights. Meaning is assigned to the *Kgotla* because it serves as "a forum for policy formulations, decision making, including political and economic developmental activities and judiciary on litigations" (Moumakwa, 2010, p. 11).

b. A place for discussion

Sebitla (2018) explains the association between symbolic order and built artefact in defining the *Kgotla*. The form of the *Kgotla* can support, encourage and strengthen multiple human interactions (Sebitla, 2018, p. 2). The floor, walls and roof of the *Kgotla* provide a specific kind of spatial fabric and enclosure. Figure 2 illustrates the spatial construct of the Kgotla in its context.

Figure 2: A circa 1700 CE photo illustrating a meeting underway in a *Kgotla*
(Source: Image adapted by author from Ravenscroft, n.d.)

Various scholars have studied the physical attributes of the *Kgotla*. Fewster (2006) refers to the significance of the spatial relationships between the main entrance, the location of the residence of the head person, the cattle kraal and kraal gate. According to Sebitla (2018, p. 94), the physical environment of the *Kgotla* serves as a map for the societal roles of the community it serves.

Research by Sebitla (2018, p. 197) demonstrates the evolvement of different spatial relationships between the *Kgotla*, courtyard and cattle kraal. The use of alternative materials, such as brick and mortar walls replacing the wooden enclosure, is accepted as structural elements defining the shared environment. Figures 3, 4 and 5 illustrate the different materials used to form the boundary and define the space of the *Kgotla*.

Figure 3: The open space of the *Kgotla* with the trees in the background and the tightly placed wooden stick fence surrounding it
(Source: Sebitla, 2018, pp. 101, 145)

Figure 4: A stone and mortar wall used to form the barrier of the *Kgotla*
(Source: Sebitla, 2018, p. 146)

Figure 5: A low-rise masonry wall is used to define the open area with a thatched structure for the elders in a modern-day *Kgotla*
(Source: Moumakwa, 2010, pp. [i], 52)

The *Kgotla* as a meeting place for robust debate and discussion could be used effectively as a spatial mediator. The *Kgotla* serves as a place for discussion and debate. It establishes a distinct relationship between structure and place, contributing directly to democratic activity within a specific community.

The traditional *Kgotla* was an open space situated next to a cattle kraal, near to the residence of the head person. Traditionally, the open area of the *Kgotla* was enclosed with a wooden stick fence. Although the materials used to make the enclosure changed over time, the meaning associated with the defined place remained intact. The function of the *Kgotla* as a public forum remained, while the proceedings evolved to become more inclusive.

The following section explores whether South African university campuses provide spaces for sharing, collaboration and the exchange of ideas.

Campus Maps and the Kgotla

A desk survey was conducted to determine if any of the 26 public universities in South Africa provide places to accommodate the functions of a *Kgotla*. For this purpose, a list compiled by the Department of Higher Education and Training (2019), with the contact details of the respective universities, was used. The official website of each university was searched using the following keywords:

- campus map;
- campus buildings; and
- infrastructure.

All the universities have some form of a campus map, using either site plans or three-dimensional representations to illustrate the campus layout. This is mostly used to communicate physical infrastructure and its associated functions. Figure 6 is a typical example of an infrastructural map of the Hatfield campus of the University of Pretoria (UP). Figure 7 shows the Sunnyside campus of the University of South Africa (Unisa) with a three-dimensional illustration.

The ideal of a "placeful" university, as described by Nørgård and Bengtsen, is not evident in Figures 6 and 7. Similarly, no evidence of a *Kgotla* is visible in either Figures 6 or 7. Although similar facilities might exist, no specific reference is made to them. Following the desk review, it was concluded that few South African university campuses refer specifically to spaces facilitating vigorous discussion and interaction. A *Kgotla*, or a similar IKS meeting place, was found lacking on most of the published campus plans and three-dimensional illustrations.
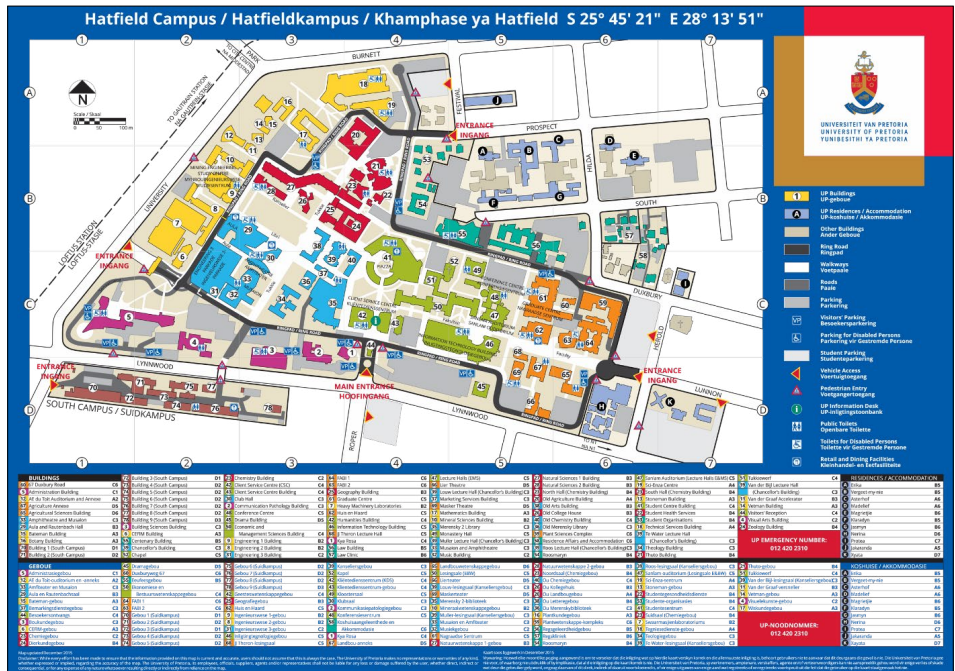
Figure 6: Site layout of the Hatfield campus of UP
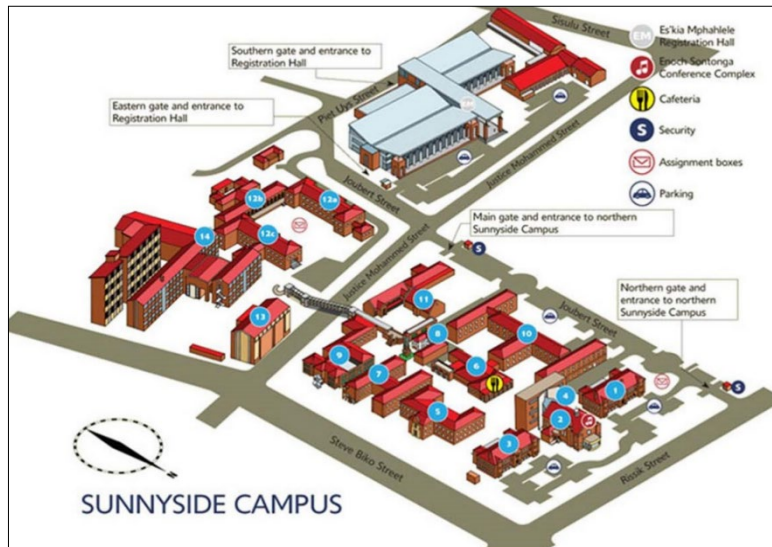*(Source: University of Pretoria, 2019)*

Figure 7: Site layout of the Sunnyside campus of Unisa
(Source: University of South Africa, 2019)

One notable exception is the campus of the Sol Plaatje University (SPU) in Kimberley. The spatial planning of this newly established university, opened in 2014, included the design of "public spaces, squares and parks to facilitate the occurrence of public meetings, events and exhibitions, and thus maximizing sites for exchange" (Sol Plaatje University, 2019). These modern-day functions align closely with the ideals of a *Kgotla* and a "placeful" university as illustrated in Figure 8.
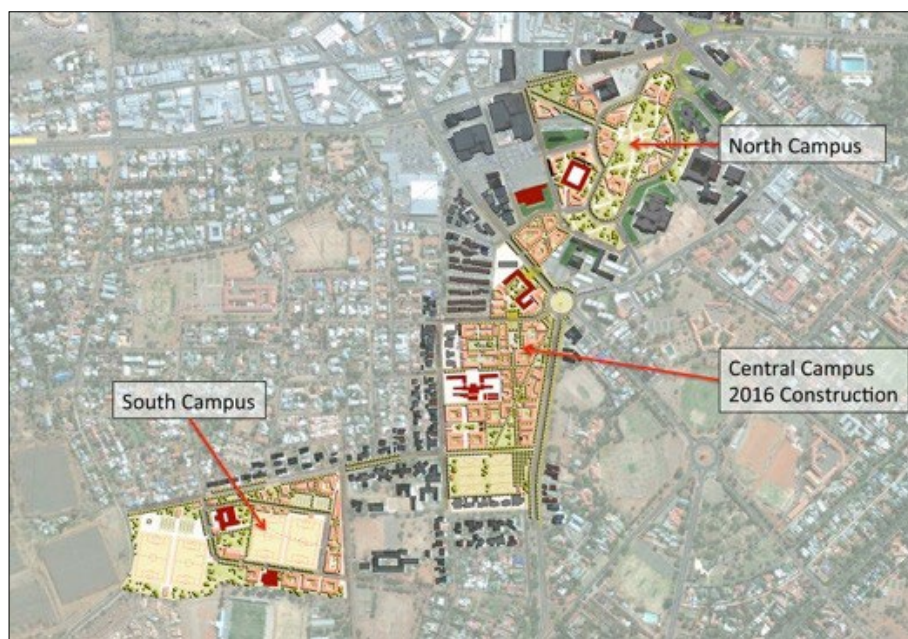

Figure 8: The Sol Plaatje University campus in context of Kimberley
(Source: Sol Plaatje University, 2019)

The official SPU website discusses issues surrounding 21st century campus design and architecture. (Sol Plaatje University, 2019) Amongst others, the following pertinent aspects are listed:

- The campus's integration with its host city,
- Shared space as a driver for the campus plan; and
- Collaboration and exchange of ideas.

To facilitate much-needed interaction on university campuses, meaningful places have to be designed, constructed and maintained. Unfortunately, limited resources for infrastructural development remain a significant stumbling block to achieve this ideal. The establishment of South Africa's first two new institutions of higher learning since 1994, SPU and the University of Mpumalanga, required an infrastructure investment programme of R1,5 billion (Sol Plaatje University, 2019).

Real-world Challenges

According to the official report, titled *Student Enrolment Planning in Public Higher Education for South Africa*, "…the higher education system has grown more rapidly than the available resources. The resultant shortfall in funding has put severe pressure on institutional infrastructure and personnel, thus compromising the ability of higher education institutions to discharge their teaching and research mandate. (Education, 2005, p. 3).

Wolhuter and Wiseman (2013, pp. 3, 14, 16) state significant challenges faced by existing universities in Africa include poor infrastructure as well as isolation from surrounding society and communities. Muller (2016) argues that "the number of first-time undergraduates entering South Africa's universities per year grew from 64,000 (excluding North-West University due to unavailable data) to 158,000" between 1995 and 2014. During the same period, "[t]he total number of students enrolled increased from 380 000 to 980 000 (Muller, 2016).

The exponential growth in student numbers inevitably had to lead to some form of catharsis. The South African context of diminishing resources and the perceived disassociation of universities from the societies they serve, contributed to the frustrations of students being personified in Fallism.

Fallism in 2015

In 2015, two student protest movements converged, culminating in the most significant student protest actions since 1994 (Pillay, 2016). The 21-year-old South African democracy saw the first group of students marching directly to the seat of Parliament. This march originated from disregarded criticism against the curriculum content and visible colonial symbols on the campus of the University of Cape Town (UCT). These seeds of discontent were formalised under the social media banner #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) (Roy & Nilsen, 2016).

Although the first mention of #FeesMustFall (#FMF) on Twitter was made by @SkumbuzoTuswa on 21 March 2015 (Wessels, 2017, p. 68), the movement gained significant momentum in October of 2015, some 1200km to the north of #RMF. After months of deliberations, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of WITS communicated a 10.5% increase in the average 2016 tuition fees (Jarvis, 2015). This sparked a revolution reminiscent of the 1976 Soweto uprisings.

Subsequently, students of all races united in their demand for free, decolonised and quality higher education. The vociferous demands from increasingly militant students were initially met with antagonism. At the time, the then President of South Africa, the Hon. Mr Jacob Zuma, commanded universities to control the students by stating that "[w]here such unacceptable violent behaviours occur, institutional management must take firm action in line with the law and their respective policies and rules (Maromo, 2015, p. 3). As a result, scenes from Apartheid South Africa replayed themselves across South African university campuses (Wessels, 2017, p. 24).

The 2017 Master's dissertation titled *#FeesMustFall: Discourse Hidden in Plain Sight*, by Wessels studies the tweets posted on Twitter using different hashtags relating to #RMF and #FMF. Wessels (2017, p. 61) concludes that the hashtags were used 62741 times. According to Wessels (2017, p. 41), the available data indicates the following (author's emphasis):

– The suppressed reality that colonial domination imposes on <u>public space</u>;

– How that domination transcends <u>public space</u> and has also transcended time (i.e. social changes in history) through hegemonic social practices;

– The effect colonial domination poses on the collective memory and realities burdening SA society's subaltern to date.

In the following section, two pertinent #FMF events are evaluated against the sub-themes of place and space. It is explored at the hand of engagement and boundaries to show how it could contribute to different outcomes.

Personal engagement without spatial boundaries

The events following the announcement of the 10.5% tuition fee increase by the CFO of WITS received extensive media coverage. The reporting included images of senior management at WITS sitting with students. These photographs are particularly powerful in showcasing efforts being made towards personal engagement with boundaries.

On 16 October 2015, the Principal of WITS, Prof. Adam Habib, returned from the higher education conference on transformation (convened by the then Higher Education and Training Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, in Durban) (Makathile, 2015). The aim of the conference was to address "the concerns of the students regarding the proposed fee increases next year" (Makathile, 2015). Once back in Johannesburg, Habib rushed to the Great Hall of WITS to meet both Deputy Vice-Chancellor Andrew Crouch and a large group of disgruntled students (Morrissey et al., 2015).

Different versions of the ensuing events are told. An online newspaper report, titled *Habib held hostage by students*, states "[h]undreds of protesting students vowed to stay the night, with Professor Adam Habib 'detained' alongside them, till executive council chairman, Dr Randall Carolissen, arrived on campus to address them …" (Morrissey et al., 2015). The headline of a separate article, by the same online publication, states that *Wits prof denies being held hostage* (Makathile, 2015).

Using ten photographs, a photographic essay, titled *PICS: Chaos at #WitsFeesWillFall protest*, tells the same story (Mokati, 2015). While one image (Figure 9) provides context to the assembled congregation in the Great Hall of Senate House, three photographs in particular (Figure 10) show Habib sitting on the floor amongst the students.

Figure 9: Students are gathering in the Great Hall of Senate House at WITS.
(Photograph: Paballo Thekiso) (Source: Mokati, 2015)

Figure 10: WITS university Principal and Vice-Chancellor,
Prof. Adam Habib, engaging with protesting students
(Photographs: Paballo Thekiso) (Source: Mokati, 2015)

When studying the three photographs in Figure 10 carefully, it portrays the removal of several barriers and fences. The restrictions include that of authority, age, economic status, social and legal standing, amongst others. The result is facilitating debate, albeit in a then hostile environment on emotionally charged themes. The photographs illustrate how a place (and the forms of interaction being facilitated in that particular space) can become an important aspect to assist in being heard.

The removal of barriers and fences between a university principal and the students ultimately lead to those present being heard in one way or another. This highlights the importance of the spatial realm and layout of university campuses. It leads to a critical question: Where are the designated (and sensitively designed) spaces on campuses that facilitate robust debate?

Spatial boundaries and distanced engagement

During the following week, the #FMF movement had grown exponentially in its vocabulary and modes of protest. The climax was set to play out on the lawns of the Union Buildings in Pretoria. When the students, parents and other supporters arrived at the Union Buildings on 23 October 2015, they were restricted to the lower terrace of the southern lawns. A makeshift fence was erected to keep the arriving protestors out.

Behind the fence, a podium was erected from which a presidential announcement was expected at noon. Figure 11 depicts an SAPS Special Task Force member looking over the statue of Madiba and the white podium to the assembly of students on the lower terrace of the Union Buildings.

Figure 11: A member of the SAPS Special Task Force looking over the statue of Madiba to the assembly of students on the lower terrace of the Union Buildings.
(Photograph: twitter.com/NickolausBauer) (Source: Sim, 2015)

The group waited for a reply to their demands from the President, Mr Jacob Zuma, while he was meeting with ministers and student representatives over the issues raised by the #FMF movement. The gathering became increasingly restless while they waited. At the front of the fence, a minority overshadowed the group who had been protesting peacefully. This group was antagonising members of the SA Police Services (SAPS). After the barrier was torn down, stones, bricks and other objects were hurled at both the SAPS and the media reporting from behind the fence. In response, the SAPS used stun grenades, tear gas, rubber bullets and a water cannon to disperse the crowd.

Just after 3.00 pm, the President announced the 0% fee increase for 2016 using national TV. The announcement did not address the actual demand for free education under #FMF, but it assisted in defusing the immediate situation.

The spatial restriction, the distanced podium and waiting period contributed towards the restlessness of the crowd and the ensuing violence. On 23 October 2015, the podium at the Union Buildings was never used. In this instance, the students (amongst others) had to accept distanced engagement.

The Need to Start Talking

During the 2015 #RMF and #FMF movements, students often expressed their anger by damaging physical property. This included the destruction of artefacts, buildings and surrounding spaces. Although South Africa is known for violent protests, often accompanied by damage to property, the anger and its subsequent ventilation might be endemic to the feeling of not being heard. The need for places where one can be heard is becoming increasingly critical. These places should be established on both university campuses and in South Africa at large.

Writing in her own capacity, Lubna Nadvi (2019), based in the School of Social Sciences at University of KwaZulu-Natal, suggests, "Let's stop the violence on campuses and start talking" in a *Pretoria News* article. Navdi (2019) makes the following pragmatic suggestions for:

> … university assemblies being called where all can speak freely and openly about their issues and not be afraid or silenced. Such open conversations will allow for solutions to emerge organically and not be held hostage to "negotiations" between representatives of groups which may never see any fruitful outcome or be stalled indefinitely.

Lubna Nadvi (2019) also argues that universities and associated tertiary institutions receiving government funding are all public spaces. As such, these spaces should "remain safe, accessible and conducive to teaching and learning and not become militarised war zones" (Nadvi, 2019).

According to Navdi (2019), it is necessary to "talk to one another as members of a university community who want the best solutions to the problems which face us collectively". This requires access to a place facilitating the debate. Universities should provide space "that invites and promotes openness, dialogue, democracy, mutual integration, care and joint responsibility (Nørgård & Bengtsen, 2016, p. 4).

Conclusion

Architecture can serve as a mediator giving identity to place through the spatial construct while addressing the needs of future generations. Buildings mostly outlast their designers. Prospective users often assign new functions and meaning to what was once a stable environment to a previous community. Herein lies the challenge, not only for the current designer but also for the future user. The current occupant and on-looker assign meaning, but the purpose of a particular space remains charged through past lived experiences.

The *Kgotla* is a spatial construct originating from IKS. The *Kgotla* could be introduced on existing South African university campuses as a place to facilitate mediation. The space should promote dialogue, democracy, assimilation, care and collective accountability. To become a meaningful place, the social construct of the *Kgotla* needs the support of the entire university community.

Future studies on how the users of university campuses perceive and experience the built artefact are necessary. The built artefact and its surrounding places and spaces undoubtedly contribute to the lived experience. These experiences should be investigated on campuses across South Africa. Ideally, the investigations should focus on personal reality and how it could aid in infrastructural design and precinct plans for university campuses on the African continent.

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How to cite:

Laubscher, J. (2019). The *Kgotla* as a Spatial Mediator on South African University Campuses. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 7(1), 29-46. DOI: 10.24085/jsaa.v7i1.3691