DETERMINING THE SOCIAL VULNERABILITY OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE AFTER THE EVENTS OF SOCIAL UNREST IN 2008 (Mentor – Mr. AJ Jordaan)

Regardt J Ferreira

DiMTEC Researcher/Disaster Management Specialist

B.Soc.Sc (Social Work) UFS
M. Disaster Management UFS
PhD Student - University of Louisville (USA)

Focus of the Presentation is to:

- Align with the aim of the 2nd Annual Conference in Disaster Risk Reduction - sharing research findings
- Give a brief overview of research conducted in 2008
  - Study investigated level of Social Vulnerability of students after the events of Social Unrest on the main campus of the University of the Free State in 2008

Overview

- Aim of the study

- Case study

- Social Vulnerability indicators

- Integration of Social Vulnerability and the PAR-Model

- Results and discussion

- *Social Vulnerability Assessment Model*

- Questions and comments?

Aim of the Study

- The aim was to engage in an investigation into the progression of vulnerability, i.e. social vulnerability and resiliency of the students towards social unrest on the main campus of the UFS.

Case Study

- First sign of Social Unrest on 21 February 2008 - Students protesting and damaging infrastructure on campus (R3 million damage) due to hostel integration

- Main outbreak of Social Unrest on the 27 February 2008 after the release of the Reitz Video

- Continuous "isolated" events of Social Unrest for two weeks up to 14 March 2008

Theoretical Framework

- Pressure and Release Model
- Model has three interrelated and causal phases of disasters, which can be defined as the progression of vulnerability on the one side of the continuum and a Hazard on the other side
  - Root Causes
  - Dynamic Pressures
  - Unsafe Conditions

VULNERABILITY ⟷ HAZARD

Root Causes → **Dynamic Pressures** → **Unsafe Conditions** → **Disaster** ← **Hazards**

Social Vulnerability

- Different perceptions towards Social Vulnerability
- Cannon's five components of Social Vulnerability:
  - Initial well-being
  - Livelihood and resilience
  - Self-protection
  - Societal protection
  - Social capital

Progression of Social Vulnerability

- Linkage between Social Vulnerability and PAR - Model

Progression Of Social Vulnerability		
Root Causes	**Dynamic Pressures**	**Unsafe Conditions**
Initial Well-Being	Initial Well-Being	Initial Well-Being
Livelihood & Resilience	Societal Protection	Livelihood and Resilience
Self-Protection	Social Capital	Self-Protection
Societal Protection		Societal Protection
Social Capital		Social Capital

Research Methodology

- Qualitative and Quantitative
- Non-Probability sampling – Quota
- Interviews, group discussions and questionnaires
- Tendency measurement – Likert scale

  - None   0
  - Very Little 1
  - Moderate   2
  - Extreme   3

Demography of Participants

- 70 participants (Language preference: 35 Afrikaans & 35 English)

  STUDY   UFS

- 45% Male & 55% Female = 44% Male & 56% Female

- 53% Black & 47% White   = 64% Black & 36% White

- 55% Made us of own accommodation & 45% Campus accommodation

Initial Well-Being

- Measured emotional and cognitive impact of social unrest as well as financial loss.

  ### - Emotional

  - irritability (+101.5)
  - anger (+98)
  - shock (+90)
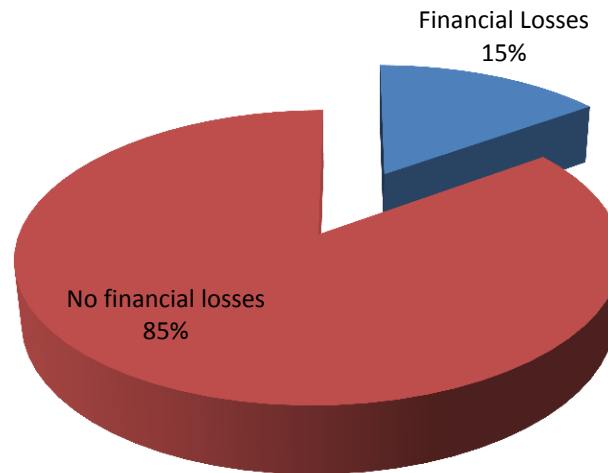 - frustration (+85)
  - fear (+74.5)
  - insecurity (+74)

  ### - Cognitive

  - Loss of trust (+76)
  - Cognitive (+63)

Initial Well-Being cont.

- Financial losses

Financial Losses from social unrest

Financial Losses
15%

No financial losses
85%

Livelihood Resilience & Self Protection

- Coping capacity of students was measured

  - High Tendency

    - Irritability   (+90)
    - Poor attention (+43.5)
    - Withdrawal   (+35.5)
    - Anger outbursts (+25.5)

  - Low Tendency

    - Anger at GOD (-22.5)
    - Hysterical Reactions (-10)
    - Anti-Social Acts (-5)

Livelihood Resilience & Self Protection cont.

- Measures that where taken by students to protect themselves included:

  - Left campus
  - Stayed away from campus
  - Spent less time on campus
  - Walked in groups on campus
  - Stayed in hostels
  - Stayed at home
  - Did not attend night class
  - Did not attend class
  - Avoided trouble
  - Did not use cars on campus
  - Carried knives
  - Bought pepper spray
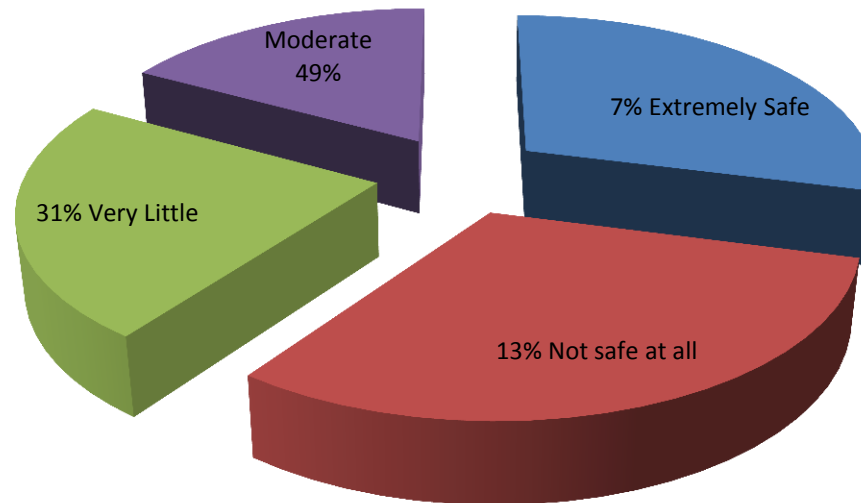 - Carried handmade weapons

Societal Protection and Social Capital

- Protection

  - South African Police Services (+74.5)

  - UFS Protection Services (+38)

  - Private Security company (+7)

Societal Protection and Social Capital cont.
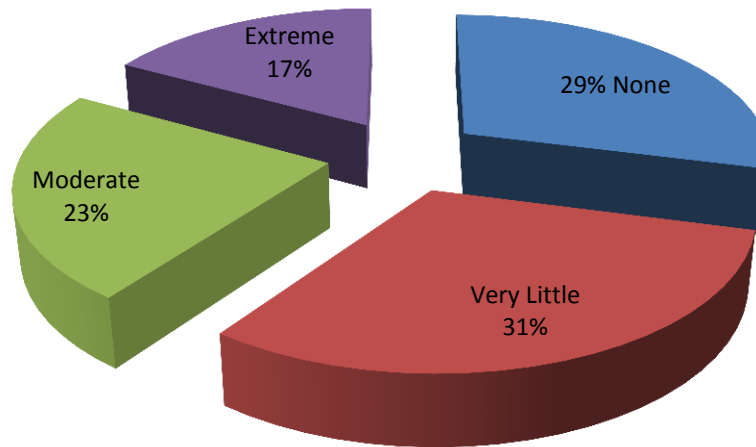
- Experience of safety on campus

Safety on Campus

- Moderate 49%
- 7% Extremely Safe
- 31% Very Little
- 13% Not safe at all

Societal Protection and Social Capital cont.

• Social Cohesion on campus before social unrest

Cohesion on campus before Social Unrest

Extreme 17%
29% None
Moderate 23%
Very Little 31%

Societal Protection and Social Capital cont.

- Social Cohesion on campus after social unrest on campus
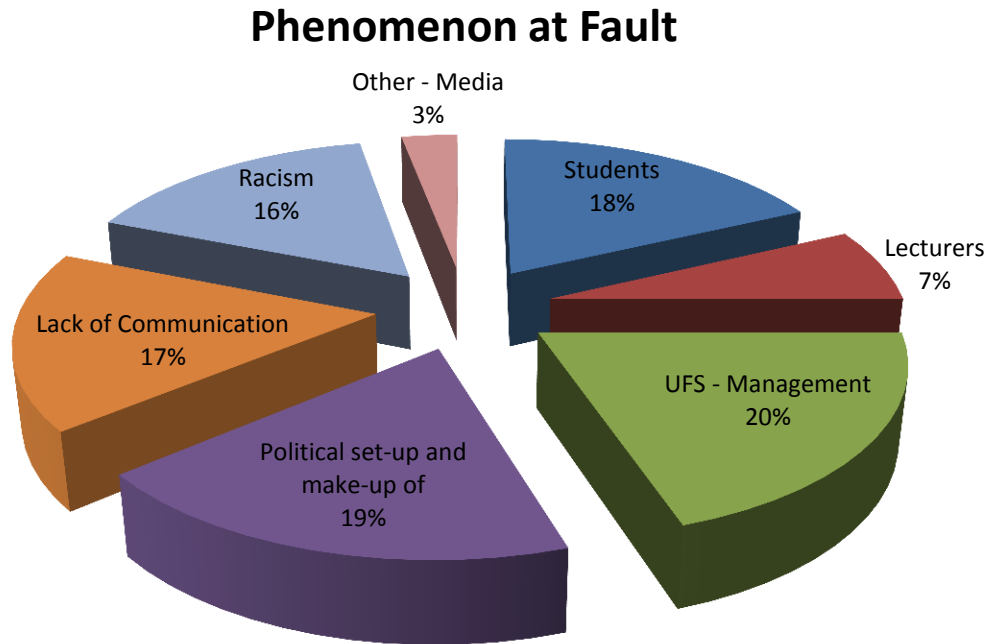
Cohesion on campus after the Social Unrest

Moderate
27%

None
43%

Very Little
30%
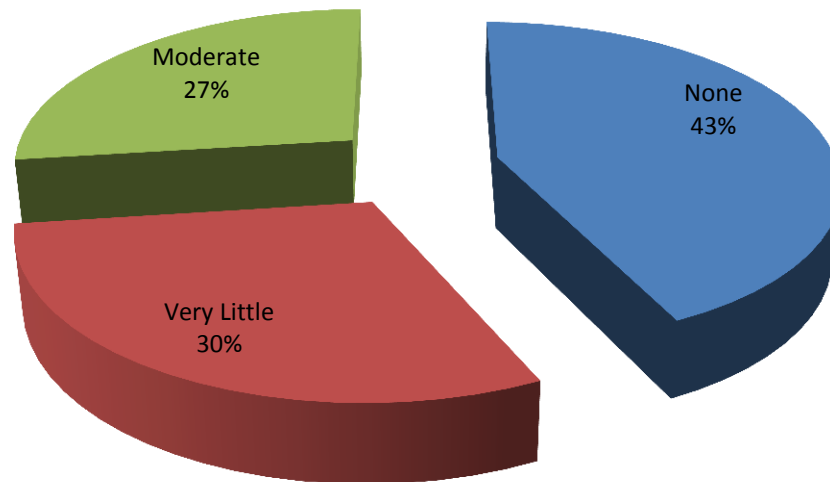
Societal Protection and Social Capital cont.

- Support from Social and Political Structures

Tendency strength for social and political support
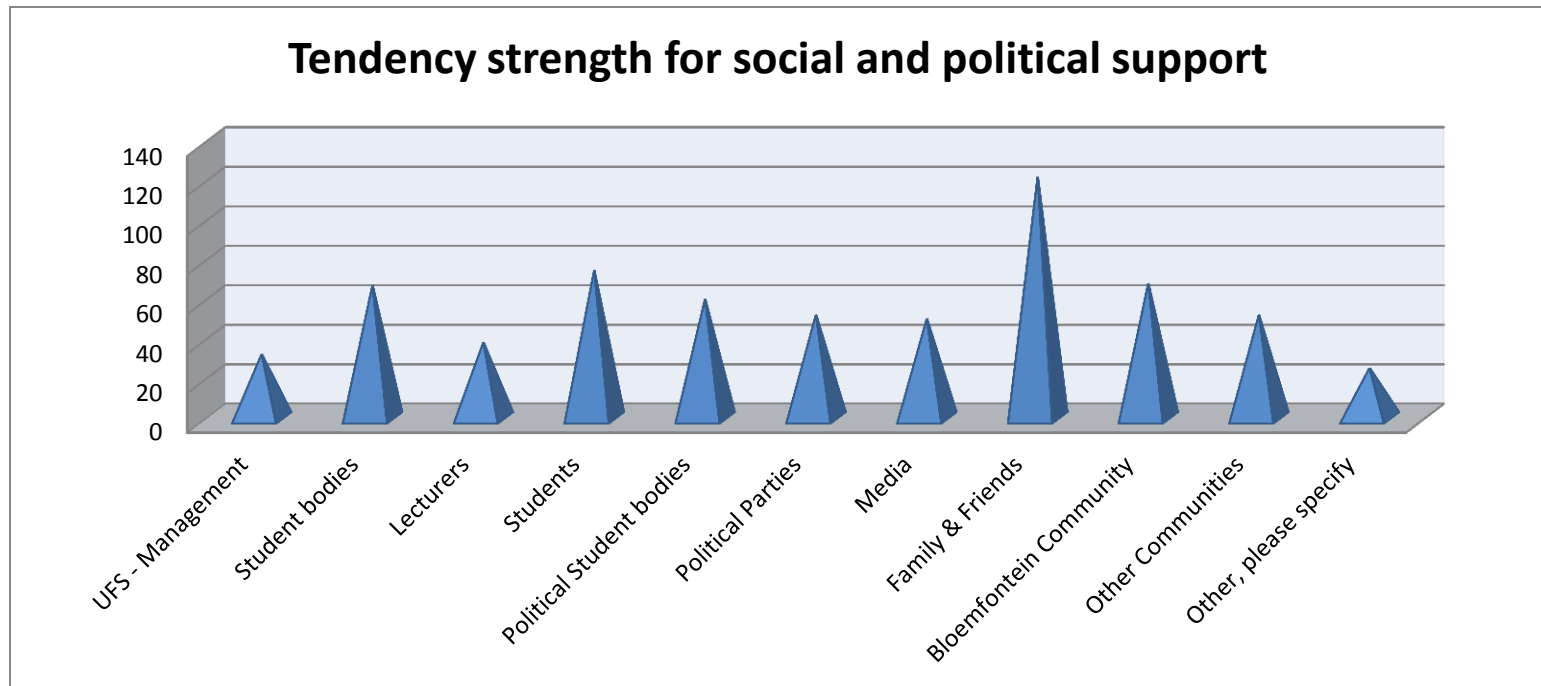
Societal Protection and Social Capital cont.

- Phenomenon at fault for social unrest on campus

Phenomenon at Fault

Other - Media 3%

Racism 16%

Students 18%

Lecturers 7%

Lack of Communication 17%

UFS - Management 20%

Political set-up and make-up of 19%

Societal Protection and Social Capital cont.

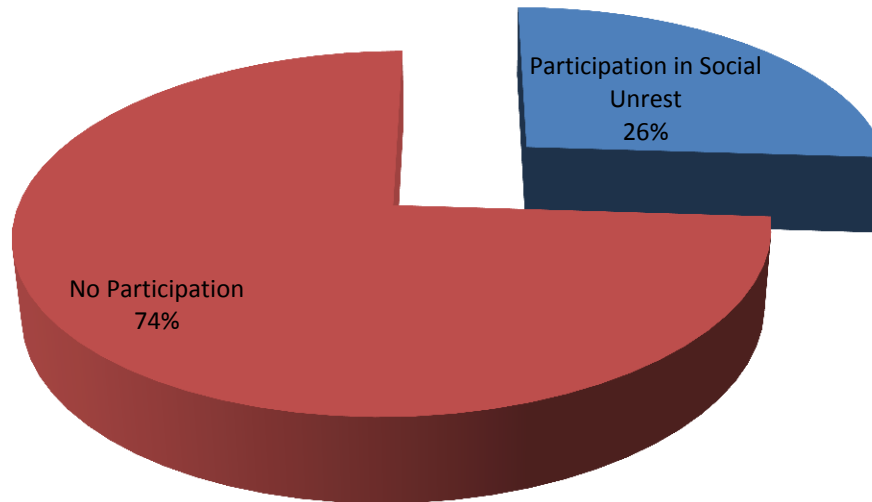- Handling of social unrest

Handeling of Social Unrest
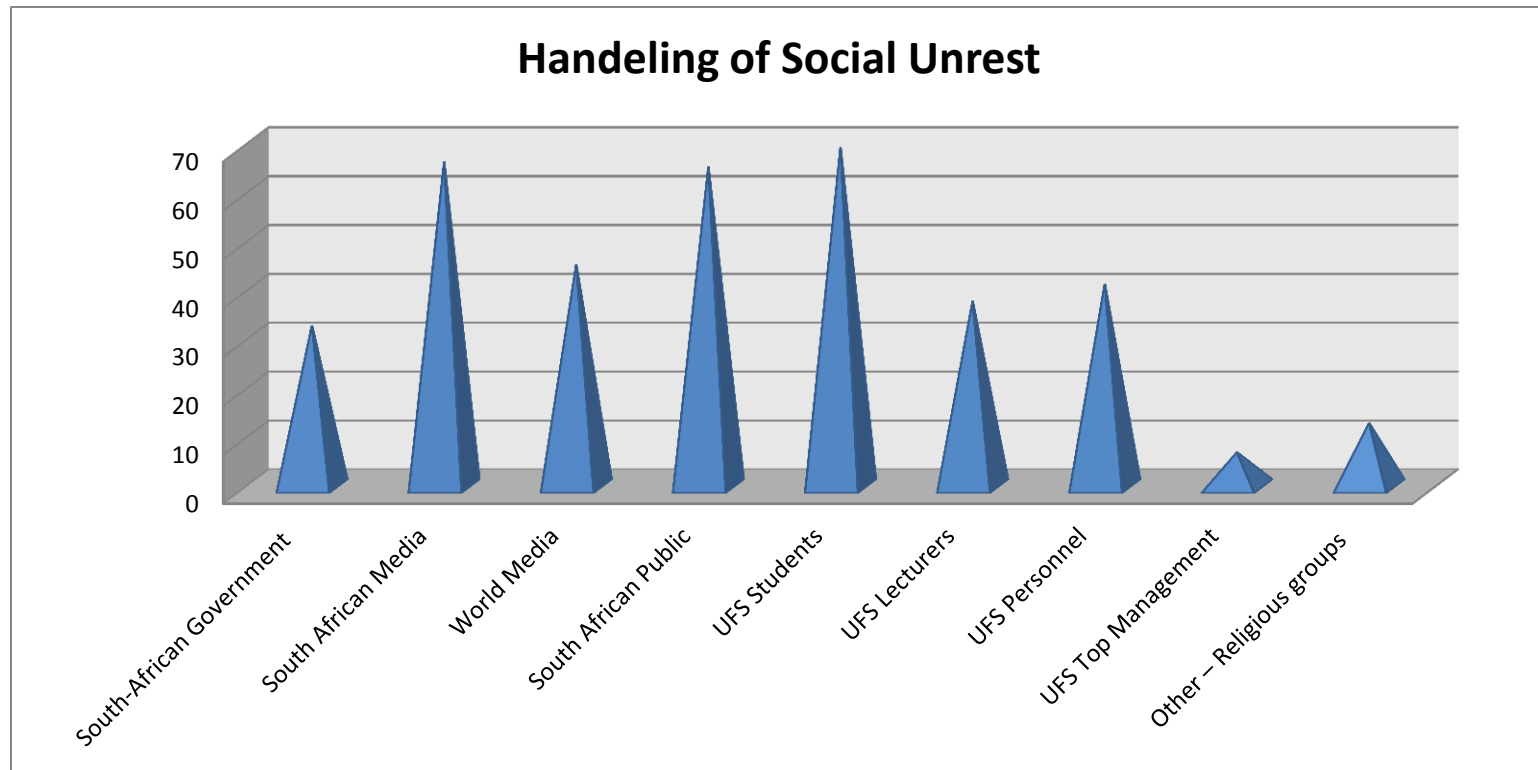
Societal Protection and Social Capital cont.

- Level of participation in social unrest

Participation in social unrest

Participation in Social
Unrest
26%

No Participation
74%

Level of Social Vulnerability

- Assessment model was developed – *Social Vulnerability Assessment Model*

  - Developed from Questionnaire for study

  - Moderate rating 50-69% (64%)

Contingency Planning

- No knowledge of contingency planning amongst students

- No contingency plan was introduced to students before and after the social unrest according to 100% of students

- Don't feel it could have helped

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Conclusions

    - Cannon's five components

    - PAR – Model

- Recommendations

    - Channel of communication should be established between students and

       top management

    - Higher academic admission requirements for students ensures less social

       unrest on campuses

    - Consult basis of knowledge on campus

    - Counselling services on campus

THANK YOU

regardtferreira@gmail.com