

**A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO FOSTER SOCIAL
COHESION IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

BY

MICHAEL SMITH

BA, SED, SM, ASM, CoG, BAHONS (Media), MA (Media)

THESIS

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Supervisor: Dr Raymond Nkwenti Fru

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DECLARATION

I, Michael, Roy Smith declares that the Thesis,

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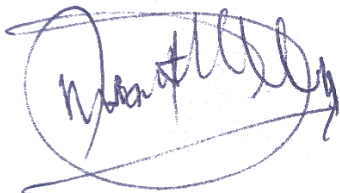
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Abstract

The aim of the study is to design a communication strategy to foster social cohesion in a higher education institution. Bricolage is the theoretical framework/lens through which I view and approach this study. The reason is institutions of higher learning have over the decades become communities of diversities of culture, religion and various other aspects of human life. Literature Reviewed include that of the two main disciplines in the title namely Communication and Social Cohesion. Because Communication deals largely with behavioural factors, the study dictates a review/exploration of both main legs namely Verbal and Nonverbal Communication. That is followed by literature regarding the three pillars of Social Cohesion, namely Social Capital, Social Inclusion and Social Mobility. Main objectives of the study include challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and indicators of success. Three countries are discussed based on their experiences relating to such objectives namely Britain, Kenya and South Africa by focusing on their political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal environments. Habermas' Communicative (Participatory) Action is used in methodology, with focus group interviews and participant observation to collect data amongst community members of the University of the Free State. Analysis includes a SWOT Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis and Nonverbal Communication Analysis, which provide components/answers for the intended communication strategy for social cohesion. Based on the theoretical framework, literature reviewed, data collected, analysis, findings and discussion thereof, a conclusion is reached, which informs the recommendations for the type of communication strategy suitable to foster social cohesion in the University of the Free State. The study therefore concludes and recommends a communication strategy based on based on the principles of Ubuntu with Participatory Development Communication as its bloodline that infiltrates all its veins for its survival.

KEYWORDS: Communication, Communication Strategy, Social Cohesion, Fostering Social Cohesion, Higher Education Institution

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Thesis to my late Parents John Mothibi and Maria Smith posthumously.

Above all, I dedicate this Thesis to the Almighty God, who was and is, and is to come, with the Bible verse:

*“If you love one another...by that the world will know that you are the Children of
God”*

John 13 verse 35

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

PAR	-	Participatory Action Research
COPAR	-	Communicative Participatory Action Research
SWOT	-	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

On the one hand, the field of Communication is probably seen as the broadest in the lives of both human beings and nature in general and as essential as food is to make a living. I however, believe that different people perceive it differently depending on the purpose of its use. To better understand it, various experts such as Tubbs and Moss, (2000:8) and Wood, (2012:10) have a common understanding that communication entails a "...process of creating meaning between two or more people". To shed more light on the definition above, Hybels and Weaver (2015:7) defines it as the use of symbols, verbally and/or nonverbally, consciously or not consciously, intentionally or unintentionally to generate meaning (information, ideas, feelings and perceptions) within and across various contexts, cultures, channels and media. On the other hand, social cohesion refers to "a situation where the members of a society share common values which enable them to identify common aims and objectives and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another" (Kearns & Forrest, 2000:995). Three main pillars constitute social cohesion, namely, social mobility, social capital and social inclusion. Therefore, a social cohesive society works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility. (Kearns & Forrest, 2001:2125).

1.1.1 Challenges in Fostering Social Cohesion

Social justice is perhaps one of the most difficult items on the agenda of all countries to achieve, depending on their respective demographic landscapes which pose different challenges respectively. Some outstanding challenges faced by various institutions of higher education, include for example, firstly, the lack of efficient and effective communication, which may lead to issues contributing towards the lack of an institutional culture with ethnic divisions which does not speak the language of unity such as in universities in the former Soviet Republics (Heyneman, 2003:73). Secondly,

the lack of social cohesion and related challenges existing lead to existence of an imbalanced, one-sided environment which communicates and promotes division, complicates integration and leads to conflict - a phenomenon evident in for example universities in the Netherlands struggling to integrate Muslim students (Bastedo, 2008:320); Thirdly, epistemological challenges relating to matters with the curriculum at the centre, such as for example, which language to use as medium of instruction like some institutions in South Africa (Soudien, 2008:36); fourthly, policy and regulatory compliance issues, including equal accessibility of information by all affected, protocol, etc, which pose challenges of inclusivity and staff tensions (Nelson Mandela University, 2005:10). It also relates to interpersonal communication on and relations across different races, cultures, etc, which appear to be a complicated task to overcome. (Figueroa, et al, 2002:14).

1.1.2 Attempts to Find Solutions to Foster Social Cohesion

Earlier models of communication developed in an attempt to find solutions for the above impediments, were rather linear, one-way processes from sources to receivers such as the Shannon and Weaver, Model of 1948, usually for the purpose of having an effect on individual receivers. Other models introduced were criticised for being one-way, top-down, persuasive models of communication as witnessed by Beltrán, (1993:3) and Díaz Bordenave (1976:2). In spite of this initial effort to shift the paradigm from action to transaction, by the end of the 1990s (Kincaid 1993:111; Rogers,1995) it became apparent that transmission and persuasive models still continue to dominate – this according to Piotrow, et al. (1997:4). Even the adoption of an institutional charter by some institutions of higher education to address issues of multilingualism, culture, accommodation, epistemological matters and policymaking (Soudien, 2008:36) had no apparent effect. Therefore, given the current events taking place at institutions of higher education, the prevailing situation largely does not witness any significant success in some cases or at least a promising progress to achieve social cohesion.

1.1.3 Conditions Suggested as Favourable to Foster Social Cohesion

Like a crop needs favourable conditions to germinate and ultimately bear fruits, favourable conditions are needed for social cohesion to be achieved. Where conditions are favourable institution-led approaches to social cohesion can be highly effective. As for such conditions Gumucio (2001:5) advocates that sustainability of

social change is more likely if the individuals and community most affected own the process and content of communication. As such, Communication for social change and cohesion would be empowering, horizontal (versus top-down), give a voice to the previously unheard members of the community, and prefer local content and ownership. Also, as members of less dominant groups attain social mobility through university, vertical social capital is created. However, while campus diversity does not ensure social mobility, it is a necessary precondition for it (Karen & Dougherty, 2005). Figueroa, et al (2002:8) adds that a community should be the agents of their own change. This implies that emphasis should shift from persuasion and the transmission of information from outside technical experts to dialogue, debate and negotiation on issues that resonate with members of the community. In addition, emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to social norms, policies, culture, and a supporting environment. Therefore, social cohesion can happen by means of developmental participatory communication (Servaes, 2001:5) through a process of community dialogue leading to collective action that affects the welfare of individual members and automatically and collectively, that of the community (White, 2003:51).

1.1.4 Threats Posed in Attempts to Foster Social Cohesion

To achieve social cohesion, literature by Bastedo (2008:321) shows that various threats exist in various institutions of higher education. Threats posed include unwillingness of certain groups (social mobility) especially after having been influenced by key role players, not to participate in matters which could bring about social cohesion. This could be because of a lack of mutual respect, which according to Pfaff, Baxter, and Jack (2014:1148) leads to a break in communication. Consequently, non-participation could lead to social exclusivity. Pfaff, Baxter, and Jack (2014:1148) notes further that the unavailability or insufficiency of social capital poses another threat; difficulty to access resources; the lack of commitment; and lastly, even if all the above are available, ineffective, or non-implementation could also pose a huge threat to the achievement of social cohesion, especially where the communication is poor. Negative criticism because of unforgiveness in the sense of who is to blame for the prevailing status quo of matters could also threaten the realisation of social cohesion.

1.1.5 Indicators of Success in Achieving Social Cohesion

In line with what is proposed by Figueroa, et al (2002:14), indicators of success in achieving social cohesion through communication include: firstly, when there is improvement in skills necessary to portray new behaviours; secondly, ideational factors present such as knowledge, beliefs, values, perceived risk, subjective norms and even self-image; emotional responses such as feelings of solidarity, empathy and confidence; and increase in social support and influence from others as well as increased advocacy to others; intention to engage in new behaviour in the future; and specific behaviours related to the problem addressed by dialogue and collective action. Taken together, these outcomes determine the capacity for cooperative action in a community “to solve their own problems themselves” (Dagrón, 2009:453). It should, however, be noted that this is a learning process, which increases the community’s overall capacity for future collective action, and increases its belief in, and value for, continual improvement.

1.2 Theoretical framework

Given the multidisciplinary nature of the study Bricolage is used as theoretical framework. This multi-layered and multiperspectival approach is grounded on one research question being approached from a diversity of theoretical positions (Mahlomaholo, 2015:3). This means that it synchronises various theories, methods, tools, and perspectives of various disciplines and through that articulates how researchers embrace flexibility and plurality. (Baker & Nelson, 2005:32) Its main aim is to encourage creativity by the researcher to create something out of nothing (Kerstetter, 2010:1), (Mahlomaholo, 2013:379), (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1999:151), (Wibberley, 2012:1) to arrive at the desired answer in addressing the problem central to the study. Employed in a broader critical theoretical/critical pedagogical context it lays the foundation for a transformative mode of multimethodological enquiry to produce more rigorous and praxiological insights into socio-political and educational phenomena (Kincheloe, 2001:679, 2005:323, Kinecheloe & Berry, 2004:23).

As such, zooming into the title of the study, it dictates firstly, a scrutiny of the use of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim’s theories to briefly explore the concept of social cohesion (Shortell, 2013:1); Secondly, a Habermasian approach is used towards the discipline of communication, which means Habermas’ theory of Communicative Action

(1984) is used to explain the teleological action, constative action, normative regulated action, and dramaturgical action of communication. Thirdly, as the study deals with diverse disciplines, culture, etc, Sakharov's Convergence Theory as viewed by Kerr (2009: 1) is of great importance to explain how networking through communication could bring factors of diversity together with its aim towards development for a common good. This is brought in line with the theory of Ubuntu as advocated by Tutu (1999) with the focus on its relation to communication and social cohesion to explain the notion that "no man is an island" and that "I am, because you are". This section is then concluded with the aim of looking in summary at what the different theories and related views advocate in terms of communication and their contribution towards achieving social cohesion.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Research Problem

Social Justice is perhaps one of the stickiest issues higher education institutions must deal with especially when they are tasked with it by their respective governments. A more serious problem and which is core to this is that of fostering social cohesion in Higher Education Institutions, which is described by Soudien (2008:135) as 'pervasive'. This is evidenced by amongst others, the lack of trust, intolerance, racism, disparities of culture, language, etc. (Jenson, 2001:12). Evidence in literature indicates that efficient and effective communication in higher education institutions can play an important role in promoting understanding between social groups and build a sense of unity, and ultimately social cohesion, which has long appealed to educators and policymakers alike (Heyneman, 2003:55).

1.3.2 Research Aim

The Study therefore aims to design a communication strategy to foster social cohesion in a higher education institution, which "is not something that an organization has, but rather what an organization does." (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2012:10).

1.3.3 Research Questions

Based on the prevailing situation as described above, the question this study aims to answer is:

1.3.3.1 Primary Research Question

How could communication foster Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution?

1.3.3.2 Secondary Research Question

Therefore, to assist in answering this overarching question, the following sub-questions are asked:

- What challenges are faced in pursuit of fostering Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions?
- What possible communication solutions exist in bringing about Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions?
- Why are conditions considered conducive to foster Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions?
- Which possible threats against achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution exist?
- What would possibly indicate success in achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution?

1.3.4 Research Objectives

1.3.4.1 Primary Research Objective

To prove that Communication can be used to foster social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution.

1.3.4.2 Secondary Research Objectives

Against the background of the research problem outlined above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- To investigate challenges faced in pursuit of fostering Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions with the focus on Communication.

- To look at and for possible solutions in bringing about Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions through Communication.
- To evaluate conditions conducive to foster Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions.
- To detect possible threats against achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution.
- To suggest possible indicators of success in achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Given the nature of the research/title Participatory Action Research is deemed most relevant for this study. Its relevance is informed by the fact that PAR promotes social justice, (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:1), which is in line with the aim of this study. Unlike the “Ivory Tower” approach as discouraged by Mahlomaholo (2012:679), this approach is one where researchers put empowerment theory into action (Sullivan et al, 2005:977). Characterised by its participatory approach, PAR is reflexive about the creation of meaning and iterative (Mahlomaholo, 2012; Babbie & Mouton, 2013). Therefore, core to PAR is the need for useful and meaningful action. As communication is core to this study, White (1994) and Servaes (2001:5) in this regard advocate for the use of developmental participatory communication through a process of community dialogue, which leads to collective action that affects the welfare of individual members and automatically and collectively, that of the community, which in turn ultimately lead to social cohesion.

During this study, PAR focuses mainly upon the formulation of a team of stakeholders (Kemmis, 2004; Kemmis and Kemmis, 2003), which in this regard consists of myself as main researcher as well as students from different fields of study, namely the political, economic and management sciences, socio-cultural, technological, environmental, and legal fields. According to Mahlomaholo (2015:13), stakeholders participate in one or more of problem definition, problem assessment, intervention planning, implementation, and evaluation. This exercise furthermore necessitates that through information and brainstorming sessions, a common vision is formulated; a

SWOT analysis is done; priorities are identified; the desired strategic plan is designed; activities are planned per priority; responsible persons are allocated per activity and resources; time frames are set; and lastly, monitoring and evaluation takes place. Mahlomaholo (2015:13). However, notwithstanding the view of Mahlomaholo (2015:13), it should be noted that, the latter exercises could be amended and differently implemented due to unforeseen circumstances and depending on the situation that would be prevailing at a particular point in time and place.

1.4.1 Data Gathering and Data Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is of importance in the study and therefore used to show how text is made sense of as the unit of analysis. Van Dijk, (1993:249) states that CDA focuses on social problems and political issues, is usually multidisciplinary and challenges power and dominance in the society. Since the study is dealing with such behavioural aspects, Caldwell and Atwal (2005:42) recommend this technique as very useful as it reveals unspoken and unacknowledged aspects of human behaviour.

Therefore, a brief background of CDA is provided according to De Beaugrande (2006:29) followed by the principles as outlined by Van Dijk (1993:249). With the consent of all participants, focus group interviews will be held as means to gather data as recommended by Caldwell and Atwal (2005:42) for a study of this nature. Data is then analysed and interpreted using the three-part analytic CDA model approach as advocated by Fairclough (1995:98) and Van Dijk (1993:249) in terms of text analysis (description), process analysis (interpretation) and social analysis (explanation). Furthermore, to draw conclusions, Mahlomaholo and Nkoane (2002:69) advise that text, discursive practices, and social structure be employed in this regard.

1.5 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

Firstly, the study contributes to the field of Education in addressing existing tensions experienced in Higher Education from a Communication point of view.

Secondly, it contributes to the field of Communication in exploring the use of communication as a powerful tool in fostering social cohesion.

Thirdly, students after completion of their studies could make a huge positive impact on society outside the parameters of the institution in terms of embracing diversity.

Lastly, as the Higher Education institution is a microcosm of the bigger picture of South Africa, the study contributes towards fostering social cohesion, transformation, and nation-building in general as well as in Institutions of Higher Learning in other countries which are basically experiencing similar problems like South Africa.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In line with the University of the Free State's Policy on Ethics, the researcher will adhere to the following:

- Submitting the research proposal with a letter from the promoter of this research to the Research Directorate of the University requesting prior permission/ approval to conduct research about and on the premises of the University.
- Get consent from individuals to participate in the study.
- Confidentiality is always kept regarding names of all participants by the invigilator/research agent.

1.7. LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Chapter 1 deals with the Introduction and Background of the Study; the Identification of Challenges in the achievement of Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions; Solutions attempted by some higher education institutions; Possible Threats for Social Cohesion; Conditions favourable for Social Cohesion, and Indicators of Success; Main Operational Concepts are defined to shed more light on the content of the study; and lastly Conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 2 discusses the Theoretical Framework used for the study of this nature. Bricolage as a lens is used through which the study is viewed and approached. Different moments of Bricolage are discussed in relation to the study and its aim and objectives. This Chapter is concluded with reason/justification as to why the framework/lens is the most appropriate to use for a study of this nature.

CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

As it is essential for every research thesis or dissertation, a Literature Review follows. Here the researcher reviews literature in the field of Communication and the field of Social Cohesion to show developments and to what extent research was done relating to the title of the study at hand.

Therefore, Communication is discussed as thoroughly as possible bearing in mind its two legs namely verbal communication and nonverbal communication. In terms of verbal communication, its nature and types are discussed in relation to the title of the study. Secondly, nonverbal communication is discussed in terms of its nature and different classifications/types.

On the other hand, the field of social cohesion is also discussed to shed light on what the study wants to achieve. Three pillars of social cohesion are further discussed, namely social inclusion, social mobility and social capital. Social Cohesion is a very broad field, which is often defined in terms of a particular context, and the focus here is on higher education institutions.

In concluding the literature review, this chapter attempts to show a link between communication and social cohesion.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on a research design and methodology for strategy formulation.

A Qualitative Method is used, and Participatory Action Research is deemed to be the best qualitative method for this study. Interviews are conducted to gather data relating to verbal communication. Secondly, Participant Observation is used to gather data for Nonverbal Communication with keen interest and focus upon the behaviour and movement of the students, whom are the target audience for this study. The Chapter is ended with a summary of the methodology process and steps in gathering data preceding its Analysis, Findings, and Interpretation, which are dealt with in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS/DATA GATHERED AND ANALYSIS

Analysis, Findings, and Interpretation of data are focused upon in this Chapter. Critical discourse analysis is used to analyse and interpret Verbal Communication data gathered. The different codes/cues of Nonverbal Communication are used to guide and analyse nonverbal communication such as behaviour, movement, the environment, and all related aspects. Findings emanating from such analysis shed light upon the situation and as such provide guidelines leading towards a conclusion.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

After having presented the data in Chapter 5, this Chapter focuses on discussing the findings thereof. This implies amongst others, bearing the title of the study in mind, verbal communication data is discussed in relation to the title and aim of the study; secondly, nonverbal communication data is discussed in relation to the title and aim of the study. The theoretical lens of the study is also borne in mind when discussing the findings. This Chapter, therefore, also forms part of the second level analysis of the study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: THE STRATEGY

Chapter 6 is the final chapter of the Study. Based upon all chapters and the ultimate Findings, the study is concluded here, and the communication strategy for social cohesion in a higher education institution is designed and presented. This is done bearing in mind the Habermasian theory of Communicative Action as well as the African theory of Ubuntu.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This Chapter dealt with the Introduction and Background of the Study; the Identification of Challenges in the achievement of Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions; Solutions attempted by some higher education institutions; Possible Threats for Social Cohesion; Conditions favourable for Social Cohesion, and Indicators of Success; Main Operational Concepts are defined to shed more light on the content of the study.

This Chapter also gave an on-point summary of all chapters constituting this study; and explains the value of the research as well as ethical issues taken into consideration when dealing with a study of this kind. Lastly it briefly promises that all sources used for this study, will be acknowledged as a vital requirement or research by means of a bibliography at the end of the study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DESIGN OF A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO FOSTER SOCIAL COHESION IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“Theory refers to sets of concepts and propositions that articulate relations among variables to explain and predict situations and results. Theories explain the nature and causes of a given problem and provide guidelines for practical interventions. Diagnoses of problems translate into strategies, that is, specific courses of action for programmatic interventions that use a variety of techniques.” (Waisboard, 2001:1)

As this study aims to design a communication strategy to foster social cohesion in a higher education institution, the purpose of this Chapter is to discuss a Theoretical Framework within the context of the title to guide the study towards achieving its aim and objectives. This is done by providing a historical background of the theoretical approach, outlining the objectives, steps involved, formats, epistemology and ontology, the role of the researcher, the relationship between the researchers and participants and language/rhetoric. The second part presents theories relevant to the study including Weber (1958), Durkheim, Roger’s (1983, 1995) Linear/Diffusion of Innovations approaches towards communication, Habermas’ (1984:85) Communicative Action, Sakharov’s Convergence Theory and lastly Tutu’s Ubuntu Theory. Lastly, I conclude this Chapter with critique about the use of the various theories within the Bricolage as theoretical framework.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The multidisciplinary and multi-perspectival nature of this study necessitates the use of Bricolage as theoretical framework.

2.2.1 Definition and Overview

Bricolage is a French term meaning the process of improvisation in a human endeavor. It is derived from the French verb *bricoler* ("to tinker"), with the English term "Do-it-yourself" being the closest equivalent of the contemporary French usage. (Baldick, 2008:42). Edwards et al (2002:22), referring to Levi-Strauss (1966), define bricolage as "the creation of objects with materials at hand, re-using existing artefacts and incorporating bits and pieces." According to Hartley (2005:10), bricolage incorporates potential audiences, meaning it brings together anything or anyone with the potential or possible capability to contribute towards achieving the intended aim and objectives.

This (Bricolage) multi-layered and multi-perspectival approach is grounded on one research question approached from a diversity of theoretical positions. This means that it synchronises various theories, methods, tools, and perspectives of various disciplines and through that articulates how researchers embrace flexibility and plurality. (Baker & Nelson, 2005:32). Its main aim is to encourage creativity by the researcher to create something out of nothing (Kerstetter, 2010:1), (Mahlomaholo, 2013:379), (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1999:151), (Wibberley, 2012:1) to arrive at the desired answer in addressing the problem central to this study. Employed in a broader critical theoretical/critical pedagogical context it lays the foundation for a transformative mode of multi-methodological enquiry to produce more rigorous and praxiological insights into socio-political and educational phenomena (Kincheloe, 2001:679, 2005:323, Kincheloe & Berry, 2004:23). Its appropriateness bodes well with the title and nature of this study in terms of aspects of social cohesion (socio-political, transformative) and higher education (pedagogical/educational).

2.2.2 Historical Background

Since its inception in the 1900s, Bricolage has evolved through the ages and this a result of the works and contributions of various researchers and theorists from various disciplines, and consequently during every age or moment it took a different shape. These include, firstly the age of Traditional Qualitative Research (1900 - 1950); Secondly, the Modernist or Golden Age (1950 – 1970); Thirdly, the age of Blurred

Genres (1970 – 1986); Fourthly, the Crises in Representation (1986 – 1990); then the Postmodern or Period of Experimental and New Ethnographies (1990 – 1995); followed by the age of Post-Experimental Enquiry (1995 – 2000) and lastly, the Methodologically Contested Present (2000 – 2010). All these periods have made significant contributions towards the field of research in general, each in its own manner, whilst building upon where the previous one had left. However, as to how the relevant ones are contributing towards this study in achieving its aim and objectives, remains to be seen. It therefore necessitates discussion of each moment individually to shed more light upon the context of this study.

2.2.2.1 Traditional Qualitative Research (1900 - 1950)

This period is the beginning or the dawn of Qualitative Research and is also referred to as the Traditional Period of qualitative research. According to Mahlomaholo (2015:6), it is associated with the foundational positivist paradigm, during which advances in the natural sciences heavily influenced human and social sciences, hence the adoption of their methodologies. Mahlomaholo (2015:6) further elaborates that the researcher as omniscient, omnipotent, participant during this period, was a mere research subject whose voice and circumstances did not matter much. Moreover, the assumption was that research could produce absolute truth only if it adhered to principles of quantification, objectivity and reliability, verifiability and prediction based on the relationship between cause and effect. (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:44); (Mahlomaholo, 2015:6).

It was during this period when Shannon and Weaver (1949) introduced a basic approach in communication consisting of the sender, message, and receiver. Simply referred to as the transmission model, its strengths are simplicity, generality, and quantifiability, which is structured based on elements of: a source of information, a transmitter, a channel, a receiver, and a destination. This form of communication is viewed as linear, top-down form of communication, which does not allow any discussion and /or freedom of expression to allow for different views from others. As such it does not involve any feedback or response. During that time, due to the channel-mindedness of the research generation then, there was no knowledge of Bricolage as lens for communication research purposes.

In addition, Schramm in (1954:3) added that researchers should not only focus on the components but the activities between them and the impact of such. He echoed Shannon and Weaver's (1949) view that communication should be viewed as processes of information transmission governed by three levels of semiotic rules, namely, the Syntactic, which entails formal properties of signs and symbols; the second as the pragmatic, which concerns the relations between signs/expressions and their users; and the last is the Semantic, which is the study of relationships between signs and symbols and what they represent. (www.merriam-webster.com) Communication to Schramm (1954:3) is therefore "social interaction, where at least two interacting agents share a common set of signs and a common set of semiotic rules".

Shannon and Weaver (1949) however, admit that there were three levels of challenges for communication within this concept, namely firstly, a technical problem in terms of how accurately the message can be transmitted; secondly, an effectiveness problem as to how effectively does the received meaning affect behavior. In scrutinising this approach, Chandler (1994) further critiques that it assumes communicators are isolated individuals; and leave no allowance for differing purposes, differing interpretations, and for unequal power relations.

Literature by Figueroa (2002:9) indicates that in 1960, Berlo expanded Shannon and Weaver's 1949 linear model of communication and created the Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) Model of Communication. Separating it into clearer parts, scholars in the field expands more on the SMCR-model by further using methodology of phenomenology and ethnography to interpretively describe experiences of subjects in smaller amounts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:6-11) (Babbie & Mouton, 2011).

The contribution made by this this traditional approach towards this study is the awareness that wherever communication takes place, you will find the presence of the basic components of sender, channel, message, and receiver. The way the Shannon

& Weaver and Berlo Models above, have been structured, with almost no difference between them, leaves me with no choice than to regard them both as linear communication approaches. Unfortunately, the linear approach has serious limitations for this study to achieve its aim and objectives especially when taking into consideration the limitations and/or challenges cited by Shannon & Weaver (1949) as well as Chandler (1994) above. Critique by the former, the latter and other scholars about this approach led to a new research perspective called the Modernist or Golden Age.

2.2.2.2 Modernist or Golden Age (1950 – 1970)

The formalisation of qualitative research to be as robust as quantitative research was the focus of researchers during the Modernist Age, with the belief that research could predict the future behaviour of people – this according to Denzin & Lincoln (2005:16) and Andriopoulos and Lewis (2009:3). Modernist theory according to Lindlof and Taylor (2002:52), concerns itself with "forms of authority and injustice that accompanied the evolution of industrial and corporate capitalism as a political-economic system". Modernists argued that knowledge could be acquired by discovering reality through the eyes of people who experience it (Du Plooy, 2005:30). The belief was further that if results are replicable, it implies that validity exists.

During the Modernist Age there was the contestation around the quantitative approaches as the only ones to redeem the world (Mahlomaholo, 2015:7) – a huge contrast compared to the Traditional Age approach as cited above. Whilst post-positivists still argued for reformation and remaking of the world, a variety of new interpretive, qualitative perspectives emerged including hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, phenomenology, cultural studies, and feminism. As views of these researchers expanded the qualitative approach, more clarity surfaced in terms of how important and useful it is. The point proven here therefore, is that quantitative research is not the only approach that could be relied upon to produce absolute truth.

For purposes of this study, and as alluded to above, we learn from Modernists that knowledge could be acquired by discovering reality through the eyes of people who experience it. Even so, emerging from the debate between modernism and post-modernism, according to Lyotard (1984) modernism should be strongly rejected,

because of its reliance on metanarratives and that such grand narratives are exclusionary – a challenge for the aim of this study, whose aim is to achieve inclusivity.

2.2.2.3 Blurred Genres (1970 – 1986)

The Modernist Age was followed by the moment of Blurred Genres between 1970 and 1986. During this period various disciplines overlapped into each other they became to an extent interdependent on each other. Social and human sciences borrowed ideas, theories, methods, analytical strategies, etc. from one another (e.g., sociology from psychology and vice versa) to do research. (Mahlomaholo, 2015:8) This I also view as an attempt to make more sense of the Bricolage. Literature shows that the humanities became central resources for critical, interpretive theory and the qualitative approach, which led to the research project to conceive broadly, and which further led to the role of the single researcher who was omnipotent and omniscient be questioned. (Babbie & Mouton, 2011; Mahlomaholo, 2015:8). Therefore, it became clearer that the truth was no longer one thing but an ever-increasing complexity and according to Nkoane (2016:6) ‘the truth can never be told, because of multiplicities of the truth.’ Complexity is experienced in this study and to make more sense of the Bricolage in it, disciplines of Communication, Higher Education and Social Science integrate and borrow from each other with the aim of achieving Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution.

Due to the greater quest for knowledge, there was even greater interaction between the social and the human sciences as the boundaries between them became porous and weakened (Nkoane, 2016), which subsequently became known as Interactionism. To me this implies that the acquisition of such knowledge even affected the research ‘landscape’ from an ontological and epistemological perspective as new phenomena surfaced, which brought along new knowledge. In the context of this study, it also influences the ontology and epistemology research approach from a human sciences perspective in terms of communication and education as well as from a social sciences perspective in terms of and towards achieving social cohesion. My understanding is that this is where researchers begin to understand that the more and more societies become democratised and with the growing awareness and need for inclusiveness as core to that, communication of a participatory nature is essential and subsequently becomes the order of the day.

Unlike the positivistic approach suggested by Durkheim (1958:16) earlier on, it was during this period when Frankfurt Scholar Habermas (1984:85) introduced a comprehensive theory of communicative action, opening space in the public sphere for everyone affected to participate. This is indicative of Habermas' insistence and emphasis on social mobility, social capital and more especially, social inclusion. It therefore links with the theory of Bricolage which embraces the notion of liberation/emancipation of participation of all affected.

2.2.2.4 Crises in Representation (1986 – 1990)

The above approach led directly to the era of Crises in Representation, during which objectivity and the possibility of one truth emerging from research were contested. Participants who were in the margins demanded attention and space in the centre of the discussions of research. Their truth also had to be told. (Mahlomaholo, 2015:9) They could no longer rely on the 'expertise' of the sole researcher and as such rejected the idea that a researcher's work is an objective depiction of a stable other. Many postmodern scholars then adopted alternatives that encourage reflection about the politics and poetics of their work. In these accounts, the embodied, collaborative, dialogic, and improvisational aspects of qualitative research were clarified. (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002:53). Emerged amongst others, were a variety of new interpretive, qualitative perspectives including hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, phenomenology, cultural studies, and feminism. (Du Plooy, 2001: 34; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002:52; Mahlomaholo, 2015:10)

Following, the above views then problematized the whole notion of objectivity, truth, validity, and reliability as it became apparent that all participants in research had their own ways of making sense of the research process as well as the findings that emerge from it. (Mahlomaholo, 2015:10). As these expanded the qualitative approach, more light was shed on its usefulness and importance in research. This is where it had been proven that the quantitative approach is not the only reliable approach in terms of producing absolute truth (Nkoane, 2016:6). Like during the moment of Blurred Genres, and for reflection on this study, more sense is made of the Bricolage in terms of a variety of disciplines, their inter-reliability, the vastness of the Bricolage and its

usefulness in a setup like that of an institution of higher education, which consists of diverse cultures, religions and political affiliations.

2.2.2.5 Postmodern or Period of Experimental and New Ethnographies (1990 – 1995)

Unlike the grand narratives, the small narratives of the local were preferred more than the grand narratives of the positivists and post positivists. Mahlomaholo (2015:11). Mahlomaholo (2015:11) explains that when doing research, the researcher had to get closer to the research participants to understand their stories and ways of making better sense. The participants were to be elevated from the status of mere research subjects to that of participants who influenced the agenda for research from its conceptualisation, data collection and interpretation phases – an approach strongly advocated by Freire (1994) and Servaes & Malikhao (2005:3). In the postmodern experimental moment, researchers continued to move away from foundational and quasi-foundational criteria. Literature indicates that postmodernist and poststructuralist approaches and their challenges to the universalism of modernist research are no longer new as alternative evaluative criteria were sought, which might prove evocative, moral, critical, and rooted in local understandings. (Mahlomaholo, 2015:11).

Lindlof and Taylor (2002:52) add that during this moment meaning itself is seen as unstable due to the rapid transformation in social structures. As a result, the focus of research is centered on more local manifestations, rather than broad generalizations. Lindlof and Taylor (2002:53) go further to say that postmodernist critical theory politicize social problems by situating them in historical and cultural contexts, to implicate themselves in the process of collecting and analyzing data, and to relativize their findings. I view experiences of various higher education institutions in this study to largely resemble the nature of the postmodernist approach, in the sense that the social problems of higher education institutions originate from the historical and cultural contexts of the broader society outside, manifest, and directly influence communities/societies inside higher education institutions. Such different manifestations cause serious complexities within higher education institutions. This is a critical point where this study attempts to answer the question “how does it happen?”

to which I regard the Bricolage as an effective approach to come to the rescue by scrutinising such manifestations, eliminating the bad and integrating the good to find a solution to the common existing and divisive challenges.

2.2.2.6 Post-experimental Enquiry (1995 – 2000)

Then came the post-Experimental moment, which used to be defined in part by a concern for storytelling for composing ethnographies in new ways and which gave the participants of research their voices back. According to Mahlomaholo (2015:12), their experiences, fears and aspirations became central to the research project, and they could present these in whatever manner they felt comfortable with, e.g., through photo, voice, visual, pictures, etc.

This moment bodes well with this study in that it assists largely with the facilitation of participatory action research and creates a platform for dialogue where participants having received their voices back, are able to communicate and express what Mahlomaholo (2015:12) above refers to as their experiences, fears, and aspirations. To me, what is interesting about this moment, is the fact that it also broadly emphasises inclusivity and as such opens for detail about a broad range of issues to be included in the dialogue, even those hidden and/or overlooked ones. It even includes and caters for example, for the uneducated, deaf/dumb, etc to for example, express their views through sign language or pictorially enough to participate and meaningfully contribute towards achieving the aim and objectives of the dialogue. The Bricolage therefore carefully examines such experiences, fears and aspirations expressed by all for an amicable solution towards social cohesion in their institution. A powerful example is the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) Talks held in 1993 to pave the way towards a united democratic South Africa, inclusive of all, Black, White, Indian, and Coloured.

2.2.2.7 Methodologically Contested Present (2000 – 2010)

The last moment in qualitative research is one of methodological contestation. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:1116) this is “a time of great tension, substantial conflict, great methodological retrenchment in some quarters and the disciplining and regulation of inquiry practices to conform with conservative, now

liberal programs and regimes that make claims regarding truth. It is also a time of great tension within the qualitative research community simply because the methodological, paradigmatic perspective and inquiry contexts are so open and varied that it is easy to believe that researchers are everywhere. Mahlomaholo, (2015:13) states that being a period that demands either complicity with or resistance to the government-sanctioned resurgence of the hegemony of positivism, it is marked by a strong turn to scientific standards and constitutes a strong positivist and post-positivist backlash against the gains of mushrooming postmodernist, poststructuralist, identity-based politics, and other critical paradigms (Mahlomaholo, 2015:13).

Like many countries, which have moved from their respective systems of inequality to democracy, South Africa for example, is to a large extent experiencing tension within its institutions of higher education, because of a legacy of apartheid that spills over into a 'hoped-for' democratic dispensation. However, this study attempts to change the picture by moving away from the colonial/positivist approach embedded in the past system by taking an approach that is inclusive of the views of all, hence it advocates the use of the Bricolage as theoretical framework to achieve such aim and objectives.

2.2.3 Objectives of the Bricolage

The main objective of the Bricolage is to account for the complexity of everyday life in relation to the object of study (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004:25) and as such, it assists us to find a way in addressing the complexity of the situation in whose parameters this study is taking place. After much confusion caused by misinterpretation and mis conceptualizations, Bricolage guru Levi-Strauss (1966) and Kincheloe and Berry (2004:25), advise that the original meaning of the concept of Bricolage be maintained in that it involves an understating of complexity and unpredictability of everyday life.

The situation in the Higher Education Institution comprises of various cultures, religions, races, political affiliations, etc, and because of its complexity, it poses various challenges in achieving social cohesion. According to Rogers (2012:4) and Kincheloe, et al (2011:301) it seeks to make meaning of the complexity of the lived life experiences relating to the higher education institution community that is being studied. In the light of such complexity, I view Bricolage as the appropriate theoretical

framework to address challenges related to such complexity to achieve social cohesion in a higher education institution.

2.2.4 Steps involved

The realisation of social cohesion in a higher education institution, according to Figueroa (2002:7), requires a strategy of communication that is “cyclical, relational and leads to an outcome of mutual change rather than one-sided, individual change”. Figueroa (2002:7). To further strengthen its facilitation, Figueroa (2002:7) further advises that such strategy should ‘entail an iterative process’ that starts with myself as a “catalyst/stimulus” internal to the university community. Notwithstanding the latter, in this study, I do not only see myself as catalyst, but as ‘catalyst-bricoleur’. As such, I am playing a facilitatory-participatory role and in so doing represent the trigger that initiates the community dialogue about social cohesion, but simultaneously participating with participants representing the various stakeholders within the university community. After that, I thus concur with Figueroa (2002:7) that when dialogue amongst members of the university community is effective, it leads to collective action and the resolution of a common problem.

The strategy I intend to design regards Community Dialogue and Action as a sequential process or series of steps that can take place within the community, some of them simultaneously, and as stated above would lead to the solution of a common problem. Related literature such as that of Figueroa (2002:12), Kincheloe and Berry (2004:94) and Mahlomaholo (2015:13) as well as previous experience, indicate that if these steps are successfully completed, community action is more likely to be successful. In this sense, the strategy is therefore descriptive (i.e., what happens) and could be used to describe and explain why previous community projects were successful or unsuccessful. In another sense, it is a prescriptive strategy (i.e., what should happen), (Figueroa, 2002:12) one that could be used by members of the community and external change agents to increase the likelihood that action by the higher education institution community will be successful.

The process of the university community dialogue and collective action must be measured to indicate whether social cohesion through communication has been achieved. According to Figueroa (2002:18) factors that would serve as key indicators

in an endeavour like this study include: firstly, when there is improvement in skills necessary to perform new behaviours; secondly, ideational factors present such as knowledge, beliefs, values, perceived risk, subjective norms and even self-image; thirdly, emotional responses such as feelings of solidarity, empathy and confidence; fourthly, an increase in social support and influence from others as well as increased advocacy to others; fifthly, intention to engage in new behaviour in the future; and, lastly, specific behaviours related to the problem addressed by dialogue and collective action. Taken together, these outcomes determine the capacity for cooperative action in a community “to solve their own problems themselves” (Dagrón, 2009:453). It should, however, be noted that this is a learning process, which increases the community’s overall capacity for future collective action, and increases its belief in, and value for, continual improvement. Furthermore, literature indicates that every time a community goes through the dialogue and collective action processes to achieve a set of shared objectives its potential to cooperate effectively in the future also increases. (Figuroa, 2002:19)

2.2.5 Formats of Bricolage

Extensive research done on it has led to the revelation of the different formats Bricolage can be perceived and implemented in and according to Denzin and Lincoln, (2000:4), Rogers, (2012:4) and Mahlomaholo (2015:5) a plethora of formats exists. However, to achieve the aim and objectives of this study, only those relevant to it are focused upon, which include the interpretive, methodological, theoretical, political, and narrative bricolage.

2.2.5.1 Interpretative bricolage

Firstly, interpretive bricolage refers to multiple ways of understanding what the challenges in a particular set up are. As interpretive bricoleur I concur with Mahlomaholo (2015:5) when he says that research is an interactive process shaped by one’s personal history, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity of those of the people in the setting. With the focus on communication, my approach in this study is taking into consideration the diverse historical backgrounds, gender, social class, race, ethnicity, and other relevant factors of participants, analyse, synchronise, and interpret

them with the aim of achieving social cohesion within the community of the higher education institution under scrutiny.

2.2.5.2 Methodological Bricolage

Multiple strategies of seeing, generating data, the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry. (Kincheloe, 2001:679; Mahlomaholo, 2015:5).

In education-related research Kincheloe (2001:679) uses the concept of bricolage to denote the use of multi-perspectival research methods. His conception of the research bricolage is that diverse theoretical traditions are employed in a broader critical theoretical/critical pedagogical context to lay the foundation for a transformative mode of multi-methodological inquiry. Like it is the case in this study, using these multiple frameworks and methodologies, researchers are empowered to produce more rigorous and praxiological insights into socio-political and educational phenomena. This bodes well with the core focal points of this study namely communication, social cohesion and higher education and their respective theories relevant to this study.

2.2.5.3 Theoretical Bricolage

With Theoretical Bricolage, varied philosophical perspectives are brought to bear on the object of study to yield richer meanings and understandings. The theoretical bricoleur reads widely and is knowledgeable about the many interpretive paradigms. (Mahlomaholo, 2015:5) Paradigms referred to here, according to Sparks (2007:3) include, firstly, the Dominant Paradigm; Secondly, the Imperialism Paradigm; thirdly, the Participatory Paradigm, and Lastly, the Globalization Paradigm.

Like in Methodological Bricolage, Kincheloe's (2001:679) conception of the research bricolage, is that diverse theoretical traditions are employed in a broader critical theoretical/critical pedagogical context to lay the foundation for a transformative mode of multi-methodological inquiry. As such researchers are empowered to produce more

rigorous and praxiological insights into socio-political and educational phenomena, which is in line with the core disciplines of this study, namely communication, social cohesion and higher education and their respective theories relevant to this study.

2.2.5.4 Political Bricolage

In recognition of the power of the context in producing ways of being, the political bricoleur knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications. (Mahlomaholo, 2015:5). Mahlomaholo (2015:5) goes further by saying that there is no value-free science and that a civic social science based on a politics of hope is sought. My understanding is that politics happen mainly because of social imbalances, which is a universal phenomenon and goes together with complexity. In a young democracy like South Africa, huge complexity is experienced because of the injustices of the past. Addressing such complexity in terms of overlapping injustices in a democracy, through communication, I cannot divorce the political views of different groups from the rest of the study if I want to bring about social cohesion amongst members of the university community.

2.2.5.5 Critical Bricolage

With multiple ways of narrating the study, representation, Critical bricoleurs stress the dialectical and hermeneutic nature of interdisciplinary inquiry, knowing that the boundaries between traditional disciplines no longer hold. (Mahlomaholo, 2015:5). Kincheloe (2005:323) uses the bricolage for example in educational research to denote the use of multi-perspectival research methods. In Kincheloe's (2005:323) conception of the research bricolage, diverse theoretical traditions are employed in a broader critical theoretical/critical pedagogical context to lay the foundation for a transformative mode of multi-methodological inquiry. This study is of such a nature that, to achieve its objective, one cannot ignore the presence of politics in it as a result higher education institutions' historical issues that are still experienced in the current dispensation, and as stated above these cause a situation of huge complexities. Therefore, using these multiple frameworks and methodologies, myself as participant-researcher together with others in the study are empowered to produce more rigorous and praxiological insights into socio-political and educational phenomena.

2.2.6 Epistemology and Ontology

Epistemology is defined as “the study of knowledge: what we know, how we know it, how we know we know it...” (vocabulary.com). From a research perspective it is “the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge.” (Merriam-Webster.com) Contrary to epistemologies of the north, which permanently erase, render invisible or dismiss as less important any different knowledge or agenda that does not conform to Modernity. The epistemologies of the South emerge as an epistemological proposal, which creates a set of cognitive practices and knowledge validation criteria. This allows other forms of knowledge, experiences, and voices to be valued, and thus, influencing social practices and political choices. (Santos & Rodriguez-Gravito, 2005). This epistemological proposal stems from the experience of the distinct social groups which have suffered in a systematic way with capitalist, patriarchy, and colonial injustices – the domination triad that constitutes today’s dominant hegemonic paradigm. My understanding is that this is the epistemological approach that perfectly guides this study in the right direction in terms of generating knowledge in line with the objectives of this study.

As such Communication Theory, specifically, has not remained aloof of these dynamics. (Santos and Rodriguez-Gravito, 2005) explain further that since the 1970s, the “Latin American communication research line” of Paulo Freire, Juan Diaz Bordenave, Luis Ramiro Beltrán has subjected western and capitalist ways of understanding communication to criticism to propose an approach towards communication which establishes strong relationships between communication itself and the processes of maintenance and transformation of societies. Since the end of the 20th century, new ways of thinking and, mostly, practising communication fitting the “epistemologies of the South” proposal as such have started to emerge, recovering all debates but integrating new challenging analytical and empirical ingredients. Therefore, a new paradigm was developed by gurus Freire (1994) and Servaes & Malikhao (2005:3) to come up with a contemporary collective approach towards complexities to generate knowledge through participation with different views to achieve a common goal.

Coming to the rescue in this study is the Bricolage which according to Kincheloe (2005:323) is grounded on an epistemology of complexity. One dimension of this complexity can be illustrated by the relationship between research and the domain of social theory. Kincheloe (2005:323) states that all observations of the world are shaped either consciously or unconsciously by social theory and that such theory provides the framework that highlights or erases what might be observed. Meanwhile, we bear in mind that theory is a cultural and linguistic artefact in its interpretation of the object of its observation and as such it is inseparable from the historical dynamics that have shaped it. Depending on where observers stand in the multidimensional web of reality, they will come to see different phenomena in different ways. (Kincheloe (2005:323) and Mahlomaholo (2015:8). Kincheloe (2005:323) goes further by stating that in a complex context like this, Bricoleurs understand that diverse epistemologies develop in different socio-historical and socio-cultural locales and in this study, it includes epistemologies of communication, social science, and education. In their appreciation of epistemological complexity like in this study, bricoleurs seek out diverse epistemologies for their unique insights and sophisticated modes of making meaning.

In the light thereof and for the purpose of this study it is therefore necessary to explore epistemologies and ontology of communication, social cohesion, and higher education. Because epistemology and ontology are interdependent, Kincheloe's (2005:323) advice regarding that is to theorize a critical multilogical epistemology and critical connected ontology to ground the research bricolage. These philosophical notions provide the research bricolage with a sophisticated understanding of the complexity of knowledge production and the interrelated complexity of both researcher positionality and phenomena in the world. This observation makes me understand that complexity of the nature of this study demands a more rigorous mode of research that can deal with the complications of socio-educational experience. Such a critical form of rigor avoids the reductionism of many monological, mimetic research orientations (Kincheloe, 2001:679, 2005:323; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004), which in my view is especially found in positivistic modes and patterns of linear thinking.

'Ontology is the nature of being.' (Merriam-Webster.com). As such, reality is subjective. Du Plooy (2001:34) states that in terms of ontology insights into communication, as part of the social world can be derived from the subjects' perspective and that the research process is essentially based on inductive reasoning, which is used to understand patterns in observations. Because the dissemination of information in this regard is based on inclusivity, Du Plooy, (2001:34) further states that access of such information leads to shared responsibility among stakeholders and as such the development of knowledge competencies. As such the organisational culture is of participatory nature.

As far as epistemology is concerned, reality can be described in terms of meaning that people attach to communication experiences. Multiple sources of knowledge exist in an institution of higher learning's setup (e.g., values, experiences, cultures, etc) which can be used to explore, interpret, and understand a subjective world. (Du Plooy,2001:35). Diversity and dialogue contribute to a more complete understanding of a higher education institution as a social environment.

2.2.7 Social Constructionism

The rapid changes taking place around the world and the challenges higher education institutions are currently facing, require new approaches to cope with such. I prefer the Social Constructionism approach as befitting for this study for various reasons following underneath.

Craig and Tracey (1995:252) defines Social Constructionism as, 'how you say something determines what the message is'. Firstly, the Social Constructionist view considers communication to be the product of the interactants sharing and creating meaning. Secondly, the Constructionist View assumes that "truth" and "ideas" are constructed or invented through the social process of communication (Craig and Tracey, 1995:253) – which I regard as integral to this study. This is an ongoing process that symbolically forms and re-forms our personal identities." (Craig and Tracey, 1995:253). Thirdly, unlike the linear Transmission Model, invented by Shannon and Weaver (1949) which sees communication as a way of sending or receiving messages

and the perfection of that, the Constructionist View sees communications as, "...in human life, info does not behave simply as bits in an electronic stream. In human life, information flow is far more like an electric current running from one landmine to another". Fourthly, the Constructionist View is a more realistic view of communication, because it involves the interacting of participants involved in this study freely sharing thoughts and ideas through dialogue - verbally and nonverbally.

Chandler's words earlier on prove that the Transmission Model is a lesser way of communicating by saying "the transmission model is not merely a gross oversimplification but a dangerously misleading representation of the nature of human communication" (Chandler, 2). He goes on to say... "humans do not communicate simply as computers or robots so that's why it's essential to truly understand the Constructionist View of Communication well. We do not simply send facts and data to one another, but we take facts and data, and they acquire meaning through the process of communication, or through interaction with others."

As a postmodern approach in this study with epistemological assumptions it generates new methods for institutional change. Dialogue, imagination, and co-creation are described and embraced not just as theoretical concepts within this approach, but as practical resources that can be actualized in conversations and interactions. (Camargo-Borges, 2003:8) These concepts can become creative resources, used as research/intervention tools to favor pluralism, allowing multiple voices to emerge and to encourage diversity where new meanings can be co-created and promote transformation of a higher education institution.

Furthermore, social constructionism blurs the division between intervention and inquiry, inviting the professional to become an integral practitioner-researcher (Camargo-Borges, 2003:8; Castells, 2004:3) or put otherwise, a Bricoleur. This stance towards intervention and knowledge production, in my view, can help higher education institutions to coordinate a collective process of collaboration among stakeholders, to reflexively and critically create knowledge that helps in understanding the higher

education institution system and the process of change promoted by such intervention. The social constructionist theory together with its resources, therefore, brings a fresh approach to the development of a higher education institution through social cohesion where the focus is on people generating meaning together to create their own world. Castells (2004:3) states that, in that sense, it sustains the assumption that organizations can change their culture by changing the conversation, by putting people together to dialogue and to co-create possibilities for action generating new possible realities.

2.2.8 Role of the Researcher/Bricoleur

As researcher, my role is to invite all stakeholders affected by this study, convene a team to collectively conduct the research with to facilitate dialogue on a possibly communication strategy to foster social cohesion in a higher education institution. These include representatives from management, unions of academic and support staff, the student representative council, political parties, cultural groups, religious groups, experts in social change and communication strategy.

Given the above, Kincheloe and Berry, (2004) describe the task of the bricoleur therefore, as, to attack existing complexity, uncovering the invisible artefacts of power and culture, and documenting the nature of their influence not only on their own scholarship but also scholarship in general. Bricoleurs in this process act on the concept that theory is not an explanation of nature, but more an explanation of our relation to nature.

2.2.9 Relationship between the Researcher/Bricoleur and Participants

Based upon the rejection of the linear/top-down approach of this study, I (as the researcher) am not regarded as a stand-alone subject, diffusing information down to participants, but form part of other participants and as such called a co-researcher as advised by Denzin and Lincoln, (2000); and Mahlomaholo, (2015). As such, Bricoleurs understand that researchers' interaction with the objects of their inquiries, are always complicated, mercurial, unpredictable and, of course, complex. Such conditions

negate the practice of planning research strategies in advance and in lieu of such rationalization of the process bricoleurs enter the research act as methodological negotiators. (Kincheloe, 2005:323)

2.2.10 Language/Rhetoric

Literature across various disciplines prove that Lévi-Strauss' notion of the bricoleur who creates improvised structures by appropriating pre-existing materials that are ready-to-hand, is now well-known within communication studies. Lévi-Strauss saw 'mythical thought' as 'a kind of bricolage' (Lévi-Strauss 1974, 17): 'it builds ideological castles out of the debris of what was once a social discourse: The bricoleur works with signs, constructing new arrangements by adopting existing signifieds as signifiers and speaking through the medium of things - by the choices made from limited possibilities. One aspect of bricolage is to construct a system of paradigms with the fragments of the available syntagmatic chains, leading in turn to new syntagms. (Lévi-Strauss 1974:35). This is especially where an instance of inequality and disparity prevails, such as this in higher education institutions.

However, Dutta (2011:142) laments that the rhetoric of inequality and disparity tends to become opted into the status quo instead of exploring the spaces of change in those very structures that underline these inequalities. In other words, the language of inequity and disparity often operates to play out the status quo of dominant social actors rather than interrogating the unequal political structures and injustices built into the unequal distribution of resources in higher education institutions. The extent to which projects of higher education disparity are situated within the broader agendas of a neoliberal project, is evident in literature like that of Soudien (2009:44) and Altbach & Peterson (2002:73) that the emphasis on disparity remains in the realm of addressing individual lifestyles (beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours) rather than on addressing the issues of underlying structures that constitute these very disparities.

What is therefore necessary within the context of this study, is amongst others, a culture-centred approach. This approach on the one hand, critically interrogates the rhetoric of the individual-level interventions, and on the other hand, emphasises the creation of discourse entry points for listening to and engaging with previously

disadvantaged and marginalised groups to seek for all-encompassing transformation of the community within the higher education institution.

2.2.11 Critique

By the look of various literature regarding qualitative research history, Communication is one of the fields that did not enjoy attention and recognition as a field, let alone its relation to and use within the Bricolage as theoretical framework.

Because the aim of the study is developmental in nature, namely ...”to foster social cohesion...” I view Development Communication as of critical importance when approaching a study of this kind. According to Waisbord (2001:3) Development Communication has its origins in post-war international aid programs for countries that were struggling with issues related to poverty, illiteracy, poor health, and a lack of economic, political, and social infrastructure. South Africa is such an example that includes all the aforementioned issues and more. Commonly it refers to the application of communication strategies and principles in the developing world. It is derived from theories of development and social change that identified the main problems of the post-war world in terms of a lack of development or progress equivalent to Western countries. Various theorists over decades interpreted development communication respectively through various paradigms to bring about social change.

Theorising in this regard necessitates, in my view, a scrutiny of such paradigms of Development Communication. These according to Sparks (2007:3) are conventionally overlapping and intertwined and include firstly, the Dominant Paradigm, which was based upon theories of modernisation, and derives some of its thinking from the works of Max Weber (1958/1904), who contributed the success of Western nations to a culture that valued entrepreneurial mindsets and hard work. Contrary to that, they believed that underdeveloped nations, on the other hand, suffer from a culture of poverty and that their people were poor, because they had poor work habits and ethics. Because the problem of underdeveloped regions was believed by modernists from the west to be an information problem, communication was presented as the instrument that would solve it. Using Rogers’ (1995:79) Diffusion of Innovations theory to diffuse innovations vertically could not assist in bringing people together, as the goal of most was to use such communication to divide and rule from the top. Concerns with this

paradigm led to the development of the Imperialist Paradigm of Cultural and Media Imperialism.

The Imperialist Paradigm of Cultural and Media Imperialism goes along with dependency theories. By forcing down their views on third world/poor countries, western nations made several countries to be dependent upon them for various resources whatsoever. Imposing such views mainly through the media, has a powerful effect on Third World nations with the intention to destroy their cultures in exchange for the adoption of theirs. (Communication Capstone, 2000).

The problem with the above paradigms is that they both have a linear, top-down approach. Common in them is the basic Sender, Message, Receiver (SMR) Model, developed by Shannon and Weaver (1949), after which Berlo (1960) added the Channel to form the S-M-C-R-Model (Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver) and culminated in Rogers' (1983; 1987; 1995) Diffusions of Innovations approach, which according to Windahl et al (2009:78) largely depends on empirical data. It is inappropriate to base a model of communication for social cohesion on a linear model of communication with empirical data that describes what happens when an individual source transmits a message to a receiver or group of receivers with some desired and predetermined individual effect. (Figueroa, 2002:35).

Even attempts by Weber (1958/1904) and Durkheim (1958) by criticizing Marx's radical approach to social cohesion, were not efficient and effective enough to bring about social change. Whereas Weber was preoccupied with rationality, Durkheim is primarily concerned with solidarity, which he believes is the normal condition of society. Therefore, the question as to what holds individuals together in social institutions, could only be answered by the need for people to form part of decisions made about their lives, which, by so doing, led to the development of another paradigm that caters for participation for social change. As such, and concurring with Figueroa (2002:35), to achieve social cohesion in a higher education institution, a model of communication is required that is cyclical and relational and leads to an outcome of mutual change rather than one-sided, individual change.

The Participatory Paradigm, therefore, is the one that brought light in various societies and emphasises the use of objects for development. Despite also referring to people as objects, its aim is to be as inclusive as possible by giving all stakeholders equal opportunity to participate in the process of social change for social cohesion. According to Dutta (2011:38) through this paradigm, participation is a strategic tool to make this possible. Notwithstanding the Participatory Paradigm, Kincaid (1979) designed the Convergence Model, which in fact expands on the participatory approach. Having scrutinised all linear approaches from Shannon and Weaver (1949) to Berlo (1960), to Schramm (1964) and other related literature, Kincaid (1979) explains that the Convergence Model, unlike the previous ones, is “a non-linear model of communication where two or more communicators strive to reach mutual understanding and leads to a relational perspective of human communication. When information is shared with individuals or groups taking part in the communication process, it leads collective action towards mutual agreement and mutual understanding.

Before that can happen, the information is understood, interpreted, and effectively perceived by individuals. Windahl (2009:78) understands that Communication in the context of this model is viewed as a transactional process rather than a single event and that the model emphasizes information exchange and networks that exist between individuals. Coupled with Habermas’ (1984:85) theory of communicative action, it makes more sense of participation and steers the study in the right direction. Habermas (1984:85) emphasises the role of communication and action and explains the teleological action, constative action, normative regulated action, and dramaturgical action that constitute communicative action, which is core in undertaking a study of this kind.

Be that as it may, although not clearly iterated by literature of Kincaid (1979) in Rogers and Kincaid (1981:203), Windahl, et al (2009:94) and Littlejohn and Foss (2009:188), I am of the view that participation in the Convergence approach is done with the aim of promoting social cohesion and as such, it is developmental. It is developmental firstly for the individual and subsequently for the community – a characteristic core to the theory of Ubuntu, which according to Tomaselli (2016:1) is a purportedly unique African concept that promotes the communitarian idea of human interconnectedness,

with the message 'I am, because you are'. Literature shows that the latest trends indicate a worldwide growing thirst to tap into this African concept to address complexities to bring people from different walks of life together – a key element of the Bricolage.

2.2.12 Contextualizing the Bricolage

Literature of Kincheloe and Berry (2005:323) and various others show that the bricolage's understanding of complexity and power, pursued in relation to the ability to deploy multiple research approaches and theoretical constructs, is the path to a new form of rigour in research. The multilogicality of the bricolage demands not only new forms of research but undermines the very structure of higher education as it now exists, says Kincheloe (2005:323). Ontologically speaking, Bricoleurs account for the influence of 'being in the world' both for themselves, other researchers, and the phenomena they set out to study. Berry (2004) in Kincheloe and Berry (2004:23) states that during the process even the Bricoleur gains new insights into the phenomena being researched and catalogues problems and unexpected consequences of engaging in the bricolage process, including dealing with institutions and researchers unfamiliar and uncomfortable with its assumptions. She asserts that such problems are inevitable, but the benefits made possible by the process encourage us to confront such difficulties and the resistance that often accompanies them.

Because this study aims to design a communication strategy to foster social cohesion in a higher education institution, the core focus of the Bricolage is the use of communication throughout. Grounded on the research question approached from a diversity of theoretical positions, the Bricolage uses theories of the dominant, imperialist, and participatory paradigms to look at the role of communication to achieve social cohesion in a higher education institution where it is non-existent, as guided by Baker and Nelson, (2005:32). Participation from different perspectives of stakeholders from political, cultural, religious, sporting, and other affiliations are taken into consideration to produce more rigorous insights into socio-political and educational phenomena as proposed by Kincheloe, (2001:679, 2005:323) and Kincheloe and Berry (2004:23). The above is in line with the title and nature of this study in terms of aspects of social cohesion (socio-political, transformative) and higher education

(pedagogical/educational). This is done by taking into consideration the challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success in the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal aspects of the institution of higher education.

2.3. DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

2.3.1 Communication

Communication is “the process of creating meaning between two or more people” (Tubbs & Moss, 2000:8; Wood, 2012:10)). Hybels and Weaver (2015:7) defines it as the use of symbols, verbally and/or nonverbally, consciously, or not consciously, intentionally, or unintentionally to generate meaning (information, ideas, feelings, and perceptions) within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media.

2.3.2 Communication Strategy

A Communication Strategy is the selection of appropriate communication objectives and the identification of the specific brand awareness and brand attitude strategy. (Google Web) Its importance for an institution is to get its message across to the target audience and or stakeholders.

2.3.3 Social Cohesion

Social cohesion refers to “a situation where the members of a society share common values which enable them to identify common aims and objectives and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another” (Kearnes & Forrest, 2000:995). Kearnes and Forrest, (2001:2125) add that this includes firstly, social capital (i.e. norms, trust, reciprocity, etc); secondly, social mobility such as mobilisation and willingness of all to participate in development towards upward mobility; and lastly, social inclusion, which refers to involvement of all to actually participate and meaningfully contribute towards the process – an approach to make everyone to feel a sense of belonging from the onset to the outcomes of the process.

2.3.4 Fostering Social Cohesion

According to the United Nations DESA's Perspectives on Social Cohesion (2008:1) Fostering Social Cohesion is about striving (growth and development) towards greater inclusiveness, more civic participation and creating opportunities for upward mobility. In short, one could view it as the glue that holds society together.

2.3.5 Higher Education Institution

Higher Education, also referred to as Tertiary Education, is education offered at a level above the secondary level. Universities, colleges, seminaries, and institutes of technology where higher education is offered are referred to as Higher Education Institutions. (Encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com)

2.3.6 Communication Strategy to Foster Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution

It is the use of communication, verbally and nonverbally for the growth, development, and promotion of common values of social capital, social inclusion and social mobility of both students and staff of different races, cultures, gender, and religious groups in a Higher Education Institution. Succinctly put: to create a society in a Higher Education Institution that is united in their diversity by using communication. When doing this, the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal aspects of the institution should be taken into consideration.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This Chapter outlined the theoretical framework in which the study is dealt with. It therefore discussed the path research developed through and the different approaches it took during respective periods until the current. Given the nature of the study, Bricolage was adopted as the most appropriate lens for use in this study, especially for reasons of diversity and complexity. To do justice to the study, the origin/history, different periods of research, different formats of bricolage as well as relevant concepts were further discussed. That therefore laid a foundation for the chapters following hereafter.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is “the process of creating meaning between two or more people” (Tubbs and Moss, 2000:8; Wood, 2012:10). Hybels and Weaver (2015:7) defines it as the use of symbols, verbally and/or nonverbally, consciously, or not consciously, intentionally, or unintentionally to generate meaning (information, ideas, feelings, and perceptions) within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media.

Social cohesion refers to “a situation where the members of a society share common values which enable them to identify common aims and objectives and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another” (Kearns and Forrest, 2000:995). Kearns and Forrest (2001:125) add that this includes firstly, social capital (i.e. norms, trust, reciprocity, etc); secondly, social mobility such as mobilisation and willingness of all to participate in development towards upward mobility; and lastly, social inclusion, which refers to involvement of all to actually participate and meaningfully contribute towards the process – an approach to make everyone to feel a sense of belonging from the onset to the outcomes of the process.

The aim of this Chapter is to review literature written thus far regarding communication and social cohesion with the focus on the role communication could play in fostering social cohesion, based upon the definitions above. This is done by providing a background of the field of communication based on its two main types, namely verbal communication, and nonverbal communication and how these relate to social behaviour. Literature of communication scholars by the likes of for example, Tubbs and Moss, (2000), Knapp and Hall (2012), Wood, (2012), Hybels and Weaver (2015), and others are brought on board to guide the study. Thereafter I provide a background of social cohesion based upon its three pillars, namely, social capital, social mobility,

and social inclusion. In this regard, relevant literature by social change experts such as Kearns and Forrest, (2000), Dutta (2011), etc. are used to base the discussion on.

A higher education institution is known for its core role of imparting specialised knowledge in particular fields and as such building a bridge in preparing human beings from especially their youth to adulthood. Notwithstanding the views and definitions by Soudien (2009), Badat (2010:16), and others, I view the concept 'university' as a combination of the terms 'unite' and 'diverse', which implies people of different origin, colour, race, culture, creed, etc coming together "united in their diversity" to constitute the concept of 'university'. Apart from their core role mentioned above, one other role higher education institutions like universities seem to neglect is that of facilitating social cohesion amongst the various groups constituting their communities to achieve such ideal community that is united in diversity, which is core to any democracy. This, one could ascribe to the lack of efficient and effective communication. Based on definitions of Communication by scholars such as Tubbs and Moss, (2000:8), Wood, (2012:10), Hybels and Weaver (2015:7), etc, I am left with no choice than to view it as the lifeblood in the lives of human beings, as it is core in institutions to thrive, organisations to grow, building families and contributes to the general growth and development of society.

After a clear description of the role of communication in social interaction and how it manifests itself in terms of both its pillars, verbally and nonverbally, it warrants a scrutiny into the link between communication and social cohesion and how it is applicable in higher education. This implies a discussion on Communication and Social Cohesion by reviewing related literature to discuss challenges faced in pursuit of fostering Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions with the focus on Communication; secondly, to discuss possible solutions in bringing about Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions through Communication; thirdly, to evaluate conditions conducive to foster Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions; fourthly, to detect possible threats against achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution as well as to discuss possible indicators of success in achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution.

3.2. COMMUNICATION

Literature over years shows that Communication forms an integral part of the lives of all living creatures as well as objects. Its vastness can be discerned in the definitions provided above and based upon that, the field of Communication is divided into two main pillars, namely Verbal Communication and Nonverbal Communication. To do justice to this study, its aim and objectives dictate an individual scrutiny of each and their respective roles in relation to social cohesion.

3.2.1 Nonverbal Communication

Research done by communication scholars reveal that nonverbal behavior, rather than words, is a major dimension of human communication. This is emphasized by Wood (2012:159) that it in fact, accounts for 65% to 93% of the total meaning of communication. It therefore implies that nonverbal behaviors, rather than verbal ones, often have more impact on how we communicate and perceive others' communication in our social interactions and relations. One reason for this is the great range it includes, from dress and eye contact and body posture. Wood (2012:159) goes further by saying that "it includes how we utter words (inflection, volume), features of environments that affect meaning such as temperature and lightening, and objects that affect personal images and interaction patterns like dress, jewelry, and furniture."

The question, however, remains: "What does this communication mean to mankind, in terms of social cohesion?" This necessitates us to zoom into this concept by discussing (for the purpose of this study), how different codes of nonverbal communication relate to social change and cohesion, which according to Remland (2000:34) and Littlejohn (2008) are classified as:

- Kinesics (the use of gestures/body movements and their impact in social interactions).
- Proxemics (the use of space and its impact during interactions).
- Chronemics (the use of time and its impact during interactions).
- Artifacts (the use of artifacts/cosmetics and its impact in interactions).
- Haptics (the use of touch and its impact in social interactions).
- Paralanguage (the use of non-phonemic properties and its impact during social interactions).
- Olfactics (the role of smell and its impact in social interactions).

Wood (2012:166) observes that because so much of our social interaction is nonverbal, the system of nonverbal communication is very broad, of an intricate nature and therefore its classification was highly influential in providing a basis for most of the early work done in this field.

3.2.1.1 Kinesics

Kinesics refers to the movement of the body to convey messages. Knapp and Hall (2012:30) further distinguish between illustrators, regulators, emblems, adaptors, and affect displays. **Illustrators**, e.g., making facial expressions to liken someone to an animal such as a baboon, pig, etc, which could be offensive to someone of another belief, religion, or culture.

- **Regulators**, e.g., to regulate the flow of communication between people.
- **Emblems**, e.g., waving your hand when greeting.
- **Adaptors**, e.g., finger-snapping and an energetic slapping of the thigh by African women when scolding one another.
- **Affect displays**, e.g., expressing anger, joy, or fear.

3.2.1.2 Proxemics

A second nonverbal code is Proxemics, which focuses on the use of space during the communication process. According to Terblanche (1996/7:33) distinction is made between 'personal space', which is invisible and flexible and territoriality (social space), which refers to space that is stationary within limits. Besides factors such as gender, age and personality, Terblanche (1996/7:33) further states that man's use of proxemics as nonverbal code is also influenced by culture and the context in which communication takes place. Within an organisation for example, it is generally perceived that the higher a person's position is, the more and better space they have; the more security they enjoy in their protected territory and the easier they can invade the space of subordinate personnel. Space during social interaction and communication is therefore not only physical, but abstract as well.

3.2.1.3 Chronemics

Chronemics is defined by De Vito (2013:254) as the study of temporal communication. In other words, it refers to the conceptualisation and handling of time as psychological and cultural element, lending specific characteristics to social relationships and to the many events contained within the communication stream. Time according to Knapp and Hall (2012:60) can be perceived as location (when); as duration (how long); as interval (the rate of occurrence); as patterns of intervals (regularity of and occurrence). De Vito (2013:254) further distinguishes between using time formally such as by means of a watch or calendar and informally such as loosely referring to it as for example, 'as soon as possible', which is causing a lot of confusion amongst different cultures in a particular social setup. For example, with reference to punctuality, some perceive and associate it with respect and effectiveness whilst others perceive it differently. It goes even to the extent that when an event starts later than the appointed time, some cultures popularly perceive and refer to it as 'African time'.

3.2.1.4 Artefacts

The artefactual code is also called objectics as according to Knapp and Hall (2012:122), because it refers to mankind's manipulation of objects such as clothing, jewellery, make-up, masks, glasses, and tattoos. Outstanding from the abovementioned clothing as viewed by Knapp and Hall (2009:208) is apparently the most important aspect of the individual artefactual code and it links with communication in terms of make-up, physical and psychological protection, sexual attraction, group identification and the indication of role or status. Culturally spoken, some African athletes at the Olympics for example, would wear jewellery perceived and believed to bring them luck to emerge victoriously whereas their white counterparts would merely perceive it as decorative. This, however, does not imply that the white counterparts are ignorant or stupid for being unable to perceive further than just the beauty aspect thereof.

3.2.1.5 Haptics

Touching behaviour or haptics is another code in the study of nonverbal communication. According to Gamble and Gamble (2013:135) this is the most important phenomenon that affects human life. Findings of research by Gamble and Gamble (2013:135) prove that students who were deprived of touch during their

childhood find it difficult to thrive as touch is important for both physical and mental health. Distinction is made that a gentle touch could for example, encourage trust, compliance and at times affection, whereas conversely an aggressive touch could naturally have negative effects such as fear or anger. However, because cultures differ in terms of the amount and frequency of social touching, they are comfortable with, questions are usually asked as to what, where, when and how should one touch a fellow student, friend, colleague, family member, etcetera. In a comparative study by Field (1999:34) it was found for example, that United States students (mainly adolescents) engage in less leaning against stroking, kissing, and hugging of their friends compared to those from a French cultural background. For touching to take place, body movement must precede. Given the fact that touching behaviour has mainly to do with body movements, a very thin line is drawn between this and kinetics.

3.2.1.6 Olfactics

Olfactics according to Knapp and Hall (2012: 201) refers to the role of smell in communication and distinguish between two main types, namely human odours and environmental odours. Firstly, Hall (1996:159) in Knapp and Hall (2012:203) states that odours in human interaction varies from culture to culture. For example, the smell of breathing in someone's face when you talk, is regarded as good and pleasing by certain Arabs. However, for most people it is not good as it poses a risk in terms of spreading an infectious disease to those in close proximity with you and as such could also automatically communicate shame.

Secondly, environmental odours have an impact by setting the mood or bringing back memories associated with a particular smell. The smell of medication, for example, could remind a person about a certain traumatic time he/she had spent in hospital after an accident. Also, certain smells/odours or fragrances are perceived to be attached to certain communities. Muslim communities for example, believe in burning so-called luck sticks and powders, which have cultural and religious significance to them. However, many South African townships are known for sewerage smells because of frequently leaking drains and rotten food in self-created dumping sites all over the place – these I view as the consequences of poor and discriminatory apartheid environmental planning, whose legislation is based upon and entailed in the Separate Amenities Act (1948).

It is clear from the above that the perception about the nature of nonverbal communication is categorised amongst others into the movement of the body, the use of space, the use of time, the manipulation of objects, touching behaviour, the nonverbal use of language in communication as well as the role of smell in social space. These could vary in terms of what, when, where, by who and how a phenomenon is perceived.

3.2.1.7 THE FUNCTIONS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Remland (2000:34) states that nonverbal codes are so important in our day-to-day communications that health practitioners (for treatment of patients), salespeople (to persuade clients), psychologists (to counsel addicts), students and academics in those fields and many others, are all taught these important skills to communicate effectively. Research by Littlejohn (2009:109) has shown that it does not matter from what point of view the functions of nonverbal communication are perceived, it remains important, firstly to take into consideration that it is to a great extent contextual and culture-specific, and secondly, it in any way forms part of a greater human communication system. Eikman and O'Sullivan (1991:163) emphasise that some behaviour is universal and as such found in most cultures. Expression of joy, anger, sadness, fear, and surprise, for example, are universally encoded and decoded across cultures.

Because of its changing nature, the functions of nonverbal communication are also further classified as those of:

- **Identification** – to identify phenomena.
- **Relationship** – to relate with other people, nature, situations, etc.
- **Emotion** – to engage in behaviour that is essential for survival; and
- **Delivery** – to exchange information about the outside world. Remland (2000:34), Littlejohn (2009:109), Knapp and Hall (2012: 203)

All the above functions are twofold and consist of both innate signals (those that are in-borne in us) and learned signals (those that we learn in our day to day lives to effectively communicate messages that we are unable to communicate with innate

signals). Over and above all Nieuliep (2000:16) succinctly describes culture as “a nonverbal system”, which implies that the nonverbal symbols or codes which members of a specific culture communicate with, are mostly culture-bound, be it innate or learned. Notwithstanding the fact that nonverbal communication codes vary across cultures in terms of their nature, Tubbs and Moss (2008:282) found that communicating them during social interaction these differences also range from the slight to the very dramatic.

3.2.2 VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The second pillar of Communication called Verbal Communication is the use of speech to convey a message between individuals or groups. Other than Nonverbal Communication, “it refers to the use of sounds and language to relay a message and serves as a vehicle for expressing desires, ideas and concepts and is vital to the processes of learning and teaching”. (Hanes, 2015:1) When one looks at its use in combination with nonverbal communication, it plays a role as the primary tool for expression between two or more people. Literature shows that a distinction is made between two main types, namely (i) spoken communication and (ii) written communication. Spoken communication refers to a message uttered through word of mouth, whereas written communication refers to a message that is documented (Tubbs and Moss, 2000; 2008; Tubbs, 2014; Hanes, 2015).

3.2.2.1 The Role of Language in Communication

Be it spoken or written communication, both are rooted in language and meaning, which is in my view playing a core role in building relationships among people during their social interaction. As such, the role of language in communication is vital for discussion in this study. According to Tubbs (2014) the symbolic nature of language shows that symbols and referents are associated with each other by convention and that it is human beings who assign different meaning to words. Reminiscent of the definition of communication by Wood (2012:10) and Hybels and Weaver (2015:7) above, this is indicative of the fact that verbal communication and semiotics are to a large extent intertwined in terms of communication in behaviour and social relationships. This I view as a universal characteristic that relates and cuts across all languages and their related cultures.

3.2.2.2 Meaning in Communication

Proper communication goes together with meaning. As stated above, it is human beings who assign meaning to subjects, objects, and various other phenomena (Tubbs, 2014). However, I understand such assigned meaning to go along with denotation and/or connotation, which again depends in which language and cultural context the communication and social conversation and interaction is taking place. It may even extend to consider also within which social environment the communication interaction is taking place. “Denotation refers to the primary associations a word has for most members of a given linguistic community, the literal meaning of a word, the ‘dictionary definition’ and represents the explicit or referential meaning of a sign. Connotation on the other hand refers to other secondary associations a word has for one or more members of that community and represents the various social overtones, cultural implications, or emotional meanings associated with a sign”. (www.grcpublishing.grc.nassa.gov)

According to Tubbs (2014:62) culture has a huge impact on the connotation of words. For example, whereas “red” in Russian is a root for the word “beautiful”, in English it relates to blood, danger or stop. Connotation and denotation are not two separate things/signs. It should be noted that they are two aspects/elements of a sign, in the sense that the connotative meanings of a word exist together with the denotative meanings. Notwithstanding the latter, Tubbs (2014:66) advises that it is more useful to distinguish between private and shared meanings in the use of language as communication means. In private meaning he states that we can use and, in effect, create our own private language. For example, calling a woman a “girl” or “cherry”, could be offensive especially for most African women, whereas most European women, feel good about it. Shared meaning on the other hand, requires some correspondence between the message as perceived by the sender and receiver/group.

Literature shows that due to the crucial role language is playing during communication and social interaction, factors that should be taken into consideration are, that:

- There is a relationship between thought and language.

- In line with Tubbs (2014:66) several problems are created through dichotomies, inferences, equivocal meanings, abstracting and euphemisms.
- When people of different cultures communicate, they may be separated not so much by grammar or vocabulary as by frame of reference.
- The use of language by males and females (context-bound) and language forms is perceived by others as powerful or powerless.
(www.grcpublishing.grc.nassa.gov)

3.3 SOCIAL COHESION

Social cohesion refers to “a situation where the members of a society share common values which enable them to identify common aims and objectives and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another” (Kearns and Forrest, 2000:995). Kearns and Forrest, (2001:2125) add that this includes firstly, social capital (i.e., norms, trust, reciprocity, etc); secondly, social mobility such as mobilisation and willingness of all to participate, and lastly, social inclusion, which refers to involvement of all to actually participate and meaningfully contribute towards the process – an approach to make everyone to feel a sense of belonging from the onset to the outcomes of the process.

3.3.1 Social Capital

Social capital encompasses norms and networks; the values and resources which both result in, and are the product of, socially negotiated ties and relationships (Edwards, 2004:81). Defined by Bueno, Salmador and Rodríguez (2007:556) social capital is a sum of current and potential resources incorporated in, available in, and derived from the network of relations possessed by an individual or social unit. Social capital is basically the sum total of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of institutionalized relationship of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Sherif, Munasinghe and Sharma, 2012:277).

Scholars in the field distinguish between: (i) bridging social capital, which concerns the voluntary associations and horizontal ties based on common interests that transcend

heterogeneous differences of ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, etc.; Secondly, and in contrast, (ii) bonding social capital, which refers to the exclusive social ties that people build around homogeneity (Putnam, 2003:132). Putnam (2003:133) further found that a social group provides essential bonding and bridging social capital in the form of protection, risk management and solidarity functions. Taking a community-based approach, and which in my view is befitting for the aim of this study, Putnam's proposition is that social capital built through encouraging voluntary associations is the cure for social inequality and lack of social trust associated with ethnic diversity (Leigh & Putnam, 2002:15), which are elements posing challenges for social cohesion in various institutions of higher education. My view is that bonding social capital could play a role when there is true social cohesion and sameness is truly experienced in the community of the institution of higher education.

3.3.2 Social Mobility

From a global perspective, social mobilisation is a term used by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF 1993, Wallack 1989:76) to describe a comprehensive planning approach that emphasizes political coalition building and community action. Waisbord (2001:11) states that it implies bringing together all feasible and practical inter-sectoral social allies to raise people's awareness of and demand for a particular development program, to assist in the delivery of resources and services and to strengthen community participation for sustainability and self-reliance. Waisbord (2001:11) elaborates that a successful mobilisation must as such be built based on mutual benefits of partners and a decentralized structure. The more interested the partners are, the more likely that a project of social mobilisation can be sustained over time. This approach does not require that partners abandon their own interests and perceptions on a given issue but are willing to coalesce around a certain problem.

One of the basic requisites is that groups carefully consider the best-suited groups to partner for a specific program. Tweneboa-Kodua, et al, (1991:25) cite an example of child survival and development program in Ghana, which started with an analysis to identify individuals and organizations with the potential to serve as partners in a social mobilisation project including those from governmental institutions, trade unions, revolutionary organizations, traditional leaders' religious organizations, women's

groups, and school teachers. Thompson and Pertschuk (1992:493) explain that during mobilisation community members become aware of a problem, identify it as a high priority for community action, and decide steps to take action. Starting with problem assessment and analysis at community level, it moves to action on chosen courses, involving many strategic allies at all levels in a wide range of support activities. Central to social mobilisation interventions is an empowerment process through which individuals or communities take direct control over their lives and environment (Minkler 1999:121).

Social mobilisation suggests that wide community participation is necessary for members to gain ownership and avoid externally imposed influences. Community mobilisation is one of the main resources in implementing behavior change. Interpersonal channels stimulated by social mobilisation allow the wide diffusion of concepts and innovations and increasing demand. Communicatively speaking, McKee (1992:1) views social mobilisation as closely interlinked with media advocacy. It is “the glue that binds advocacy activities to more planned and researched program communication activities.” It strengthens advocacy efforts and relates them to social marketing activities; it makes it possible to add efforts from different groups to reach all levels of society by engaging in different activities: service delivery, mobilising resources providing new channels for communication, training, logistical and managerial support for field workers. The World Bank (1992) nutrition and family planning projects in Bangladesh mobilising through non-governmental organisations, prove to be a good example, in which all stakeholders organised and took action for a common purpose.

Waisbord (2001:12) emphasises that mobilisation of communities should focus on building confidence, trust, and respect, increasing the knowledge base, and enabling community members to participate, and become more proactive regarding their own health behavior. The implementation required to identify and utilize village communication networks, train field workers, locate and mobilise opinion leaders, activate link persons, establish rotating peer group discussions, provide information and supplies at meetings. According to Waisbord (2001:13) Activities have proven to strengthen the sense of ownership among different stakeholders, which ultimately results in a more successful intervention.

3.3.3 Social Inclusion

Common sense dictates that the moment one talks about “inclusion” it simultaneously implies that something/someone has been “excluded”. In simple terms I understand it as “to put in (include) what has been left out (excluded)”. Therefore... “Social inclusion is based on briefs of belonging, acceptance and recognition and entails the realization of full and equal participation in and from political, economic and social dimensions of a particular institution”. (Jones, et al, 2011) I believe however, that depending on the nature/type of situation in an institution we must also add cultural, environmental, technological, and legal approaches to the latter dimensions. That makes of it a phenomenon that recognize and values diversity. “It is about engendering feelings of belonging by increasing social equality and the participation of diverse and disadvantaged populations” (Jones, et al, 2011).

Moreover, Social inclusion is a multi-dimensional and cross-sectional concept, which needs to be mainstreamed into various areas and levels of the particular community. According to Mulunga and Yazdanifard (2014:2) it does not lie within one tier or section of society only, nor does it rely on only one area of policy to effect changes, but there is a larger and infinitely more comprehensive aim to social inclusion that encompasses many areas of society and humanity. As referred to above by Jones, et al, (2011:638), it warrants involvement of all including the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, technological, and legal areas affected within the community of an institution of higher education.

From the above one learns that it is only when you effectively and broadly mobilise the community of a higher education institution with the necessary social capital to include them to fully participate in all dimensions thereof, from inception of the process until the end, that there is hope for social cohesion. However, in order to mobilise, you need to communicate! In order to use social capital, you need to communicate! In order to promote inclusiveness and full participation, you need to communicate!

3.4 CHALLENGES FACED IN PURSUIT OF FOSTERING SOCIAL COHESION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Literature by Altbach and Petterson (2003:55), amongst others, show that despite the potential for universities to take on a larger and more deliberate role in the fostering and/or advancement of social cohesion, various national contexts reveal numerous pitfalls associated with such endeavours: Findings indicate firstly, that some academic cultures reject the idea that the university has any social role to play other than preparing students for careers. Secondly, others choose to set themselves apart from society or ignore particular social problems. Thirdly, in some cases, universities themselves have become models of immoral or unprofessional behaviour by institutionalizing corruption and other self-serving practices. Fourthly, on occasion, the social role of the university has been hampered by governments. Curricula have been imposed that support the consolidation of political power among groups favoured and belonging to certain factions at the expense of the less dominant. Ruling parties have introduced courses designed to advance ideological indoctrination or repress competing worldviews. In some instances, criticism of public policy from within the higher education community has resulted in tensions or even violence involving the government, the academy, and militant elements of society. In other instances, discussion and debate-essential ingredients in university quality - have been avoided because of fear of retribution. Lastly, some have made social cohesion more difficult to attain while others in the worst-case scenarios have even exacerbated inter-communal conflict. (Heyneman, et al, 2003:3) Whether those aspects are either political, economic, social, technological, environmental, or even legal in nature, higher education institutions can be said to have failed to fulfil their social role in most if not all of them. Following beneath, is an attempt to unpack the situation as it reveals itself internationally, continentally as well as locally.

3.4.1 Political Challenges - Policy and Regulatory Issues

Political challenges in higher education institutions are mainly because of different views of the various stakeholders like for example represented political parties regarding what the policies entail in terms of running a particular diverse institution of higher education. On occasion the social role of various universities in Europe has been hampered by governments such as those in the Netherlands. According to Altbach and Peterson (2008:56) curricula have been imposed that support the

consolidation of political power amongst the dominant groups at the expense of the poor and less dominant groups. Most ruling parties introduce courses to advance ideological indoctrination or repress competing world views. Heyneman, et al (2003:73) observed that in some instances criticism of public policy from within the higher education community resulted in tensions or even violence involving governments, the academy, and militant elements of society. In other instances, discussion and debate-essential ingredients in university quality have been avoided out of fear of retribution.

According to Mulongo (2013:49) the UNESCO (2005) Report describes education inequality between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' in Kenya as overwhelming. DPMF (2012:17), views this as "one of the major drivers of social inequality in Kenya". Challenges relating to access to higher education facilities in Kenya can be traced to colonial policy on development which significantly entrenched exclusionary practices resulting into various amenities being distributed along colonial administrative structures/divisions, with ethnic groups in the more resourced side of life profiting from the closeness to these amenities (DPMF, 2012:17). Literature shows that such disparities are playing out in various institutions of higher education across Kenya.

Matters relating to policy and regulatory compliance issues, including equal accessibility of information by all affected, protocol, etc, like at Nelson Mandela Metro University in South Africa, pose challenges of inclusivity, staff tensions and other related matters. (NMMU, 2005:10)

3.4.2 Economic Challenges

According to Hallak and Poisson (2002:28) various negative forces are accompanied by an international rise in corruption associated with higher education. Global proliferation of educational fraud is taking place at an increasing frequency across multiple functions – a phenomenon that is especially found in universities in Europe. This includes admissions, academic grading, as well as general professional misconduct in accreditation at institutional level and credentialing at individual level. Eckstein, (2003:2); Heuser, (2005:8) as well as Hallak and Poisson, (2007:109) are of the view that these phenomena can be attributed largely to the increased monetary and social stakes associated with having a college degree. Notwithstanding the latter,

Slover-Linett and Stoner (2009:5) ascribe economic challenges in higher education institutions primarily to a general global economic downturn, which leads mainly to lack of funding and major budget cuts in some instances.

Socio-economic elitism, according to the Association for the Advancement of Higher Education and Development is apparently topping the list when dealing with inequality in Kenyan Higher Education. After asking the perhaps fundamental question as to what causes such disparities, Kenyan researchers by the likes of Limo (2012:1192) and others in education posit that “the quality and quantity of Education provided to an individual in Kenya is mostly influenced by economic ability”. Entry to university education in Kenya is mostly dependent on a student’s socio–economic background raising issues of unfair access thereby ringing bells of inequality. No matter how poor their performance, students from wealthy and elite families are mostly found in expensive schools and would almost automatically be accepted at universities, at the expense of the poor who are also tax-payers as much as the wealthy and elite. This to me therefore implies that the situation is even worse when it comes to the unemployed and poorest of the poor. The situation according to literature, replicates itself from one higher education institution to another.

Whilst the demands of higher education increased for the application of increased knowledge of the labour market, the problem is that access to higher education in a country like South Africa, due to amongst others, increased student fees, substitutions of loans for grants, diminishing subsidies to student facilities, etc are huge barriers, especially for prospective poor students. The South African statistics bear witness to the fact that too many poor and middle-class income students fail to enrol in higher education due to unaffordability. As such, the lack of access to higher education, be it at first year or the subsequent years, has in recent years led to the #FeesMustFall campaign in South Africa, bringing the higher education sector to a standstill for months.

What worsens the situation according to Heyneman (2003:29) are changes in funding from government which are providing greater financial challenges, requiring institutions to seek additional support from other public, or private partnership sources in order to make the investment in staff, equipment, and infrastructure to support their

aspirations for excellence. On the other hand, higher education institutions' expenses have increased a lot than before. They must maintain themselves within the limited budget at their disposal. Hence, this becomes one of the major challenges in Higher Education nowadays. According to Heyneman (2003:37) the funding bodies provide less than 40% of the income of most institutions. Given that status quo of affairs, those are perhaps the reasons why most higher education institutions have become largely defocused from their vision and mission of knowledge production to that of entrepreneurship spending a lot of time on generating revenue, posing further challenges in terms of their compatibility against other institutions of higher education. Ultimately only the rich/financially equipped get access to facilities/education, because they are able to afford to pay for their studies, whereas the poor has to hassle by making loans, etc to get access to higher education.

3.4.3 Socio-Cultural Challenges

Social interpersonal communication and relations across different cultures, races, religions, etc, appear to be a complicated task for Institutions of Higher Education to realise. (Figueroa, et al, 2002:14). It may very well be a case of Higher Education Institutions having failed to prioritize the instilment of values, attitudes, and ethics into the accomplishment of their objectives of knowledge production and skills and development. Some universities, especially in Europe even go to the extent of rejecting the idea that they have any social role to play other than their academic role. Altbach and Peterson (2002:56)

Despite its importance, the integrity and therefore legitimacy of the value-instilling function may be increasingly problematic, going hand-in-hand with Epistemological challenges with the Curriculum at the Centre. The SemTech (Semantic Technologies for learning and teaching) project identified curriculum design/alignment as one of the big challenges experienced by Higher Education Institutions across the world. (Tiropanis, 2009:2) One example is which language to use as medium of instruction – a challenge generally faced by most higher education institutions, especially those in South Africa. (Soudien, 2009:36). Challenges of epistemology in Higher Education can according to Osasere (2015:1) further be distinguished in terms of (i) epistemology that is developmental, (ii) personal epistemology and (iii) social epistemology.

Heyneman, et al, (2003:73) noticed that the lack of efficient and effective communication in various institutions has led to issues contributing towards the lack of an institutional culture with ethnic and religious divisions, which does not speak the language of cohesion – a challenge such as that in Dutch universities in the Netherlands where people especially from the indigenous Dutch community's struggle to accept and integrate students from Islamic background. In Lesotho, for example, where the National University of Lesotho is the only university the country has, where the King of the Basotho, King Letsie III is also the sole permanent Chancellor to ensure advancement of the Sesotho culture as core to the Higher Education Institution's vision and mission, (NUL Prospectus, 2017:2) to which students of other ethnic groups feel alienated or rejected for being of a different ethnic group. As a result, behavioural problems are informed by such alienation and poor and/or lack of social relations and communication amongst members of the general university community, be it students, academic and/or administrative/operational staff, which could be further perceived as a challenge of safety and risk in the environment of the institution.

Inequality in access to education is a common phenomenon in Kenya leading to a vicious cycle in regional, ethnic, class and gender variation in the country (Keriga, 2009). Out of the various ethnic groups in Kenya, it has been customary over decades to give preferential treatment to those groups that are closely associated with certain ethnic/traditional and political leaders. Kenya's Strategic Plan on Higher Education (2013:17) bears evidence that that status quo of matters in the country had spilled over into the education system and to a large extent affected especially institutions of higher education.

Even discrimination based on gender also appears to be an outstanding social challenge in Kenya's higher education system. According to Mulongo (2013:50) researchers in Kenya posit that inequality in access to higher education has affected women more than men. Gender disparities are very stark, with female enrolment being half of male enrolment in some institutions. A 'Government of Kenya Report' (2000) indicates that female students comprised only about one-third of the total enrolment of students at the five public universities in the 1998 academic year.

3.4.4 Environmental Challenges

The existence of an imbalanced, one-sided environment which communicates and promotes division and conflict such as at South African universities is a huge challenge. The likes of the University of Cape Town, North West University, University of Pretoria and Stellenbosch University are examples where for instance, statues of only white people are all over the premises both inside and outside the buildings. Viewed as discriminatory towards non-white students and staff, this led to the #RhodesMustFall campaign during which students at the University of Cape Town embarked on a campaign to remove the statue of Cecil John Rhodes from the University premises. In some instances, universities' environments had been planned to suit a particular racial, cultural, or religious grouping and as such complicates integration - a phenomenon evident in for example universities in the Netherlands struggling to integrate Muslim students (Bastedo, 2008:320).

Campus safety is another challenge experienced at various institutions of higher education. This refers to the environments both inside as well as outside the buildings of institutions. Insufficient and ineffective safety and security measures led to various instances of criminal activities such as unrests, violence, rape, robbery, theft and even killings especially at gunpoint – a phenomenon that has repeated itself at various universities in the United States of America. Others include those of some students refusing to be near students of other races in terms of sharing residences and in some instances even discussion groups of common interest because of racist upbringing. Such status quo of matters led to various students having to move to other residences; others having sought for alternative accommodation outside the premises of the university; and others deregistering from one university to register at another, mainly for safety and security reasons.

Though not part of policy per se, the environment/area where a student comes from in Kenya forms to a large extent part and parcel of the terms and conditions in determining whether a student should be admitted in a higher education institution or not. (Kenyan Ministry of Education Strategic Plan, 2013) The University of Nairobi is a typical example where a large majority of students come from well-developed urban areas, whereas a very small percentage comes from arid and semi-arid areas. This virus spreads and further discriminates against women, by allowing only few women

access to higher education, becoming even worse when it comes to women from arid and semi-arid areas by putting them at the tail-end of access to higher education.

The situation according to related literature, replicates itself all over the country, especially in public universities where students would accordingly group/associate with those of their class/type.

3.4.5 Technological Challenges

Globally, society today is driven by technology for its communications, its economy, and increasingly various other factors in its day-to-day organization. Given this, O'Donohue (2000:110) mentions some shadow elements that are challenges threatening our broader and deeper sense of belonging: "We are on a runaway train, bedazzled by technology, a postmodern culture, consumerism, and the functionalist mind. We are indeed creating and choosing our own prisons!" Notwithstanding such imprisonment, according to Cantabrana (2015:44) the inverse is also true, namely that the lack of investment in technology in higher education may prove to be a significant barrier to the ability of universities to compete in new or changing markets in terms of accommodating diversity.

Furthermore, the need for the flexibility and contextual learning provided by electronic tools is increasing. This is in my view because of global technological developments especially in developed countries such as in the West as well as cooperation and growing competition especially in the corporate world, which puts pressure upon universities to produce graduates from diverse backgrounds in line with such needs out in the markets. Ferreira (2003:40) notices that an increasing use of IT enabled systems and the concept of e-learning have also given rise to stronger competition in a range of national and international markets, opening up the opportunity for people from various socio-economic backgrounds to study in ways in which higher education may traditionally not have been able to support, which poses challenges for universities in poor/underdeveloped countries to adapt to their standards for the sake of compatibility. Ferreira (2003:41) Consequently, the expansion of online education in a country like Kenya becomes an urgent need, and simultaneously a challenge due to the lack of capacity and or resources of various types, such as human, financial, technological, etc. The question one asks yourself is: If this is a challenge for

universities in some developed countries, what more about universities in developing and/or third world countries, especially those within the African continent?

3.4.6 Legal Challenges

Higher Education Institutions are also facing various legal challenges, of which some will demand serious attention in the future. Literature about research recently conducted by Ferris (www.ferris.edu/alliance) identified the top concerns as firstly, compliance (i.e. how to develop and manage an effective compliance program), and increasing regulation by various bodies; secondly, issues relating to governance between and among the general council and university management; thirdly distressed students/employees; fourthly, proliferation of more unions as a result of employment discrimination claims against employees and job applicants based upon race, colour, national origin, class, political affiliation, gender, marital status religion, disability, whether they are qualified or not for positions, promotion, benefits, and even appearance, etc. Fifthly, many universities also experience challenges relating to race and diversity in admissions. Reminiscent here is the U.S. Supreme Court, which had struck down a mechanical race-based admissions preference policy as unconstitutionally favouring one race over another, while upholding a race-conscious admissions policy which viewed race as merely one factor among many.

3.5 ATTEMPTED SOLUTIONS IN BRINGING ABOUT SOCIAL COHESION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

To address challenges in pursuit of bringing about social cohesion, many Institutions of Higher Education adopted various approaches/strategies for implementation among their respective institutions' communities. These were based upon views of Durkheim (1984), Weber (1988) and Shannon and Weaver, (1963:2), Bordenave and Beltrán and Rogers' (1965) Diffusions Approach.

3.5.1 Shannon and Weaver's Approach

To find solutions for the above impediments earlier strategies were rather linear, one-way processes from source to receiver such as that of Shannon and Weaver, (1963:2) usually for the purpose of having an effect on individual receivers. Literature of

lordache-Platis and Josan (2009:64) witnesses this in universities in Romania where they follow a dominantly instructive and informative approach both in their teaching and general running of the university. I view this as an approach indicative of leaving no room for those at grassroots level to voice their concerns, views/opinion regarding matters directly or indirectly affecting them.

3.5.2 Bordenave and Beltrán's Approach

Other Institutions of Higher Education attempted solutions by introducing approaches such as those of Bordenave (1976:2) and Beltrán, (1993:3) and were criticised for being just one-way, top-down, and persuasive in approach, which does not differ much from that of Shannon and Weaver above, apart from having more persuasive techniques.

3.5.3 Diffusions Approach

A further attempt to facilitate social cohesion in higher education institutions was based on Rogers' (1983) diffusions approach who wanted to understand the adoption of different behaviours. This approach was aimed at replacing that of Shannon and Weaver and Bordenave and Beltrán above by diffusing innovations through various media channels/platforms.

Rogers' (1995:162) view is that innovations diffuse over time according to five stages through which an individual passes in the adoption thereof, namely awareness, knowledge and interest, decision, trial, and adoption/rejection. Notwithstanding earlier adopters, he proposed that they act as models to emulate and generate a climate of acceptance and an appetite for change and referred to those who are slow to adopt as laggards. (Rogers, 1995:163).

As such, Development Communications during the era of research by Rogers' and his fellow scholars entailed a "process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intent to change his behaviour, somehow with some persuasive techniques. In this instance, the source usually wants to alter the receiver's knowledge of some idea, create, or change his attitude towards the idea, or persuade him to adopt the idea as part of his regular behaviour". (Waisbord, 2001:12) My view of this

approach is that it was merely a decorated, spiced-up version of the top-down linear approach through a broader platform of a variety of communication channels and tools. Unfortunately, given the diverse, multi-cultural and multi-religious nature and the integral complexities of most universities, it cannot address the need to bring about social cohesion through communication in them.

Despite this initial effort to shift the paradigm from action to transaction by the end of the 1990s, according to Kincaid (1993:111) and Rogers (1998:276) it became apparent that transmission and persuasive strategies continue to dominate. British and other similar Universities in traditionally colonialist countries are typical examples of such - this according to Piotrow, et al. (1997:4). It is, therefore, no surprise that many universities in various African countries in political transition struggle to shift the paradigm from a linear top-down to a liberated participatory/inclusive one, because they still have some overlapping colonial elements channelling them to carry out the mandate of their coloniser masters.

3.5.4 Adoption of an Institutional Charter

Even the adoption of an institutional charter by some institutions of higher education to address issues of multilingualism, culture, accommodation, epistemological matters and policy-making (Soudien, 2009:36) had no apparent effect. Scenarios related to these are evident especially in universities with diverse populations like South Africa, where everyone is entitled to study at any university of their choice, as entailed in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108/1996:2). Therefore, given the current events taking place at institutions of higher education, it is clear that the prevailing situation largely does not witness any significant change in some cases or at least promising progress to achieve social cohesion.

3.5.5 Curriculum Alignment

Shifting the paradigm from a linear top-down approach to a more participatory/inclusive one Curriculum alignment is another attempt made by some institutions. In Indonesia, Heyneman (2003:68) noticed that public Islamic universities have instituted a civics course in their curriculum that focuses on the development of

tolerance, civil dialogue, and democratic decision-making in order to respond to past and future threats of intolerance and violence. However, some private Islamic universities have balked at adopting the curriculum in its entirety because they prefer not to address some of the sensitive issues that it deals with, such as the rights and role of women in the university community/society.

Heyneman (2003:68) further reflects that in post-apartheid South Africa, for example, universities recognized that as they faced a changing student population, curricula had to be developed to reflect multiple points of view. To respond to that, new faculty members were recruited to develop new study programmes. However, as the catastrophic human toll of the HIV/AIDS crisis has become apparent, individual academics have expressed frustration with institutional inaction. While Volks (2004:161) described South African universities as attending to "business as usual", some members of the academic community feel that it is their responsibility to help students understand the epidemic in all its personal, social, economic, health and political manifestations, seeing that the university as a social actor is not adequately fulfilling its role.

3.5.6 Political Solutions

The political landscape of a country largely affects and determines social issues such as social cohesion and other related matters in higher education institutions. As such, political solutions to challenges inside institutions of higher education, I view as core in striving towards fostering social cohesion in such institutions.

As such the Brexit issue in the European Union politics is perhaps the greatest 'virus' that has ever infected and affected Europe in all aspects. To rescue at least higher education institutions, Graham's (www.ox.ac.uk) Europaeum scheme is the first of a series of efforts by British universities to continue collaboration with their European partners after Brexit.

Graham (www.ox.ac.uk) a former master of Balliol College, noticed that Oxford and St Andrews are among 13 elite institutions to have signed up to a scholar's programme that asks postgraduate researchers to come up with practical solutions to social and political issues such as human trafficking, youth unemployment and regional

separatism in higher education institutions. Graham's (www.ox.ac.za) intention with the programme was to show that universities can act to overcome divisive issues that provoked Brexit. The expectation was outcomes with meaningful policy initiatives; the results of their efforts have got to have value for the university society; can be idealistic, but also must be pinned into reality; outcomes that will excite people and be useful to all, interest someone and give them a solution that they can bring about.

Furthermore, Graham (www.ox.ac.uk) states that the University of Warwick is in talks with peers in EU member states to offer joint undergraduate degrees, while the Russell Group of leading research institutions is looking at creating new student exchanges with Europe if the UK is unable to remain in the Erasmus programme after 2020. Oxford is also embarking on an innovative partnership with four universities in Berlin, including Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, allowing Oxford researchers to collaborate with German colleagues.

Kenya's political solution for social cohesion in higher education stems from the National Cohesion and Integration Commission's report compiled for the whole country and its institutions in line with requirements and support of the United Nations Development Programme (2013). As such the overarching aim to provide a political solution is the establishment of an adequate legal and policy operational environment.

According to the National Cohesion and Integration Commission Report (2013:53) the NCIC was established as a response to post-election violence in 2008, which affected the whole of Kenya, including its Institutions of Higher Education. Since then, the country has undergone numerous changes in legislation especially with the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and the need therefore to review the NCI Act (12 of 2008) and align it with the Constitution. Several issues had to be addressed for the NCI Act to be a more effective tool for promoting national cohesion and integration. These include: (i) the need to review the Act to recognise and/or encompass other actors/institutions in national cohesion and integration processes, so as to maximise on synergies; (ii) the need to review, re-align or rationalise institutions that are likely to overlap in their mandates to avoid duplication of effort; (iii) need to extend the physical presence of the institutions to local levels for effective monitoring system; and (iv) the need to update the Act based on the provisions of the

Constitution (2010). ii. The Commission in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs developed the National Cohesion and Integration (NCI) Policy. The development of this legislation was aimed at mainstreaming national Cohesion and integration in relevant government ministries, departments, agencies/ institutions. The policy was expected to enhance the consistency and efficiency with which the government and other stakeholders design and implement appropriate interventions aimed at promoting national cohesion and integration.

Having been approved by Cabinet, there existed the need for it to be adopted by Parliament as a sessional paper and its contents be fully implemented. iii. There was a need to establish a comprehensive referral mechanism that would allow easy handing over of issues that were not covered by the mandate of NCI Act to other institutions and put in place measures to monitor the referral processes to its successful conclusion. This would ensure that the recommendations and advisories issued by the Commission are implemented to the latter; and the necessary feedback is relayed back to the Commission.

Above challenges of language of instruction, accommodation, access, racism, etc. at South African universities such as Pretoria, Stellenbosch, Potchefstroom, etc., the Reitz racist experience at the University of the Free State, was perhaps the most outstanding of all which led to urgent and forced political intervention by the Minister of Education in 2008, to find solutions to those and many others. Such intervention was to establish a Ministerial Commission on Transformation, Social Cohesion, and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions in Higher Education (Soudien et al, 2008:5). Emanating from the findings of its Report, the Commission recommended the following as solutions: (in Soudien et al, 2008:5)

- To avoid racial stigmatisation of students, a clear and transparent criteria and guidelines for access should be developed by all institutions.
- Considering the continuing discrimination that students are facing across the spectrum of institutions in the country, it is recommended that institutions should introduce compulsory staff development programmes to familiarise staff members

with and sensitise them to the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

- Given both the subtle and insidious forms of gender discrimination and harassment being experienced by female students on several campuses, institutions should take serious steps to both protect and promote the interests of women including gender sensitisation campaigns and confidence building training programmes aimed at everybody.
- Having heard about humiliating experiences suffered by male students in particular, the committee recommended that institutions review their student orientation programmes to ensure their appropriateness in terms of addressing issues of inclusivity and diversity, while preserving the dignity of students.

3.5.7 Economic Solutions

Since the various European countries realised the many things, they share across various sectors, which resulted in the establishment of the European Commission, higher education institutions were viewed as core to the development of their economy. (www.oecd.org) A blanket approach was therefore taken by the European heads of state when they decided in 2000 in Lisbon that Europe should become the most competitive and dynamic world economy based on the knowledge society (Lisbon European Council, 2000). In other words, developing the knowledge society is the only chance for Europe to keep its envied standard of living and relatively good social cohesion.

By making “Strong Universities” the topic of the convention by the European University Association in March 2005, (EUA, 2005, Barroso, 2005), higher education and research appeared to be very high on the agenda and therefore questioned the role of universities (2005) in social cohesion and various other aspects. In line with what Keohler and Huber (2006:68) states, Europe seems to be trapped in a vicious circle, which is without a faster economic growth, it is impossible to invest sufficiently in higher education and research for social cohesion and without these investments, it will not

be possible to stimulate the economic growth and thus secure the public and financial means to sustain the comfortable labour conditions and generous social security system. The role of universities could therefore not be overlooked as they are the producers of the knowledge that facilitates social cohesion from all perspectives. However, to facilitate that, charity had to begin at home. Members of the university communities had to have social cohesion amongst themselves first, before reaching out to then broader European society.

According to Mulongo (2013:3) most students in Kenya selected to join public universities as regular students are from high quality secondary schools over the years, which again have been dominated by pupils from high-cost private primary schools. This shows clear marginalisation of the poor as deep as from the roots of Kenya's education system. Realising such injustice after decades of Kenyan independence, the government was forced to consider introducing a quota system in admitting students from private schools - a decision that has received overwhelming support from both internal and external stakeholders. Despite this, it does not necessarily provide a total solution for social cohesion amongst the various groups as lines of division between the various groups are still clear in terms of class and ethnicity.

Although according to Soudien (2009:15) some progress has been made to close the gap between those who are economically stable and especially the previously disadvantaged, by providing financial assistance to needy students through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) it is clearly insufficient. Attempts to leverage other financially related resources to facilitate access to, and for the success of, financially disadvantaged students at higher education facilities could also not bear the desired fruits for social cohesion. After the country-wide #FeesMustFall protests, the Fees Commission also were not bearers of good news to all, lamenting that it would be unbearable for the State's coffers. Even the 1% tax increase announced by the then Minister of Finance, Mr Malusi Gigaba during his Budget Vote to close the gap in higher education remains to be seen. (Gigaba, 2017/2018)

3.5.8 Social Solutions

In his study, Bastedo (2008) examined how Dutch universities responded to conflicts over the integration of immigrants from religious minority populations. He argues that Dutch universities have largely failed to adapt to these social changes due to entrenched beliefs in university culture. It only makes clear sense when Bastedo (2008:123) says that the only way for the European Union and the Dutch government to improve social cohesion through universities, is to follow the adoption of a new bottom-up model approach of governance to match government's needs with university cultures.

3.5.9 Technological Solutions

Despite the response of Higher Education Institutions to this new technology being uncharacteristically rapid, the availability of a plethora of new technological tools is offering learning opportunities to anyone at any time anywhere is a good attempt in promoting easy access for all. (Heynemann, 2002:70). I, however, view it as insufficient to foster social cohesion. Technologies like internet and its associated technologies can increase the capacity of an educator more quickly, easily, and more scalable to help students get access and connections to content, context, and community resulting in more powerful learning experience. The OECD Report (www.oecd.org) adds that Pedagogy should be individually tailored and delivered through the new technologies such as the Web. Interaction should be between student-student; student-author, and student-teacher. Teachers are primarily guides. Education is life-long based and placeless. Information can rid us of our narrow minds. Technology can and will liberate us.

Given its rapid development rate Information and Communications Technology is also seen as a major driving force of economic change and has also improved the rate of communication and information exchange to bring members of the university community together. It is for this reason and others related, that the Kenyan government views a strong combination of higher education and information and communications technology as an absolute necessity for the nation to participate as a full partner in the world's fast forming, knowledge-based economy. This, according to the Kenyan Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan, Vision 2030 (2013:17). A further attempt is that some institutions of higher learning also committed to expanding

communication networking through the fibre optic network which will facilitate open distance and e-Learning and telecommunication. (Soudien, 2009:114)

3.5.10 Environmental Solutions

Speaking from an infrastructure perspective, in 2009 in Kenya it was anticipated that the increase in the number of universities would reduce the wastage of students who attain university entry grades. However, even with this expansion in 2009 only 81,000 candidates out of 300,000 candidates (27%) who attained the minimum entry grade were admitted. (Mulongo, 2013:57)

In terms of both the South African White Paper on Education (3/1997:13) and Mulongo (2013:58) participation that includes all stakeholders warrants public infrastructure and facilities that are universally accessible, which includes those such as university community centres, recreational facilities, libraries, and various resource centres with internet facilities. When partly or fully in place, these are the basic services which will create conditions for people to have a sense of belonging by not suffering the painful consequence of being unable to afford them. (Mulongo, 2013:59). As long as both the advantaged and disadvantaged have equal access to or benefit from these public facilities and services, they will all feel less burdened by their differences in socio-economic status, thus alleviating a possible sense of exclusion or frustration. It is important to note though, that access alone does not necessarily ensure use of public facilities, as unequal power and social relations within communities may inhibit the use of facilities by vulnerable groups.

3.5.11 Legal Solutions

Every university leader should be prepared for potential lawsuits by retaining competent counsel and remaining regularly advised as to changing developments in each of their areas of the law. It is almost casting stone that an institution of such a nature has its own internal resources to deal with matters that need legal attention, amongst which some even offer legal qualifications in their faculties of law. However, many institutions of higher education cannot effectively utilise such resources to create conditions favourable to provide solutions for social cohesion amongst their internal communities. (OECD Report, www.oecd.org), (Kenyan Ministry of Education Strategic Plan on Higher Education, 2013:19)

To avoid conflicting with the law, it is perhaps best to take pro-active steps to come into and remain in compliance with the law, and to continuously train and update administrators in the latest legal developments affecting higher education. Various European institutions of higher learning feel comfortable with legal services from external service providers/consultants to provide legal solutions for their internal challenges. (OECD Report, www.oecd.org). This could make the university's community members to feel undermined as this approach excludes them from dealing and finding solutions themselves for their own internal problems.

Others prefer the services of an internally appointed university attorney, whom, in their view, would create and implement, in collaboration with other university departments, a robust preventative law programme aimed at promoting a campus culture that avoids the need to engage in formal adversarial proceedings. (*www.ferris.edu/alliance*) (OECD Report, www.oecd.org). For example, to provide legal solutions Kenya decided to put in place a variety of policies and policy instruments that positively impact upon the effectiveness of the higher education sector. These policies have been aligned to Kenya's overarching Vision 2030 and the constitution of Kenya 2010.

3.6. CONDITIONS FAVOURABLE TO FOSTER SOCIAL COHESION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Over the years literature of Figueroa et al (2002:5) and others indicates that various conditions to a large extent dictate the approach and direction to be taken when dealing with issues relating to social change. The outcome also largely depends on such conditions. For favourable conditions to create and sustain inclusive higher education communities/societies, it is critical that all members thereof are able and motivated to participate in one way or the other in political, economic, social, technological, environmental as well as legal activities, at all levels. I believe that a society where all its members feel that they are playing a part, have access to their basic needs/livelihoods, and are provided with the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, is a society that will best foster principles of inclusiveness. The challenges of institutions as discussed above, make it

obligatory to look into how political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal conditions prevailing in institutions of higher education relate to social cohesion. Both Figueroa et al (2002:5) and Heyneman (2002:73) emphasise that where conditions are favourable, institution-led approaches to social cohesion in higher education institutions can be highly effective.

3.6.1 Political Conditions

3.6.1.1 Emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to policies.

Stable Political Conditions are perhaps core in fostering social cohesion in an institution of higher learning. For such conditions the existence of a strong civil society is fundamental for active participation and making policies and an institution accountable. Communication for social cohesion should therefore be empowering, horizontal (versus top-down), give a voice to the previously unheard members of the community, and be biased towards local content and ownership. (Figueroa et al, 2002:5; Heyneman, 2002:73) It fosters respect for the rights, dignity, and privileges of all people, while assuming that they fulfil their responsibilities within their society. There must be freedom for the students and staff to express diverse views and develop unconventional unique ideas. Members of the university community must have the confidence to engage and interact with each other and build mutual trust while acknowledging their differences.

3.6.1.2 Effective leadership is crucial to the development of an inclusive society.

Where leadership is not representative of the society, a division between the people and their leaders may eventually result in smaller groupings and or factions that could later become difficult to bring together again. Altbach and Patterson (2003:3) therefore advise that the most common condition favourable for addressing such critical element is by engaging in open consultations with members of the university society about issues such as the budget and enhancing the free and timely flow of information amongst them and other stakeholders. Popular participation in decision-making and policy formulation processes could be sought for in all governance-related matters.

Simultaneously an effort should be made to achieve transparency and accountability by all decision-makers and stakeholders.

3.6.2 Economic Conditions

3.6.2.1 Equity in the distribution of wealth and resources

How the resources are allocated and utilized will significantly affect the orientation of a society, either towards a more integrated, inclusive society, or an exclusive, polarized, and disintegrated one. Altbach and Petterson (2003:12) Therefore, socio-economic policies should be geared towards managing equitable distribution and equal opportunities for the university community, depending on what the needs of staff and students are respectively.

3.6.2.2 Inclusive economic policies, instructions, and programs

Inclusive economic policies, instructions and programs that are sensitive to and cater for the poor/less advantaged and vulnerable, need to be put in place in all areas/sectors and effectively implemented. There is a need for strong monitoring and evaluation tools to demonstrate achievement of inclusiveness as well as highlight areas for improvement. Altbach and Petterson (2003:12)

3.6.3 Social Conditions

3.6.3.1 Ownership of the Process and Content of Communication

As for such conditions Gumucio (2001:5) advocates that sustainability of social cohesion is more likely if the individuals and community most affected own the process and content of communication. As stated earlier on, Communication for social change and cohesion would be empowering, horizontal (versus top-down), give a voice to the previously unheard members of the community, and be biased towards local content and ownership. Also, as members of less dominant groups attain social mobility through university, vertical social capital is created. Figueroa, et al (2002:8) emphasises that a community should be the agents of their own change. This to me implies that emphasis should shift from persuasion and the transmission of information from external experts to internal dialogue, debate and negotiation on issues that resonate with members of the university community. In addition, emphasis on

outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to social norms, policies, culture, and a supporting environment. Figueroa, et al (2002:8)

3.6.3.2 Campus Cultural Diversity

Another dimension of inclusive societies is tolerance for and appreciation of cultural diversity. (Karen & Dougherty, 2005:33). This includes societies that celebrate multiple and diverse expressions of identities. By celebrating diversity, there is a recognition and affirmation of the differences between and among members of society, which enables societies to move away from labelling, categorizing, and classifying people, towards more inclusive policies. Enabling the expression of a diversity of views/opinions provides the checks and balances crucial for the development of a society, while allowing for the greatest number of diverse opinions to enter every discourse.

However, Karen and Dougherty (2005:34) caution that, while campus diversity does not ensure social mobility, it is a necessary precondition for it. To make mobility feasible, it is essential to assure mutual recognition of degrees and credit points while at the same time allowing for individuality and diversity. They further add that campus diversification tends to improve the education of non-minorities by exposing them to a wider variety of views. Thus, properly inclusive university enrolment and hiring policies are important for several practical reasons in addition to the support that such policies lend to social cohesion.

3.6.3.3 Emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to social norms and culture.

Cross and Johnson (2008:275) are of the view that there is certainly a perception among students that participation in the Wits University community enhances the chances of epistemic success, though it is not a condition *sine qua non* that one succeeds. According to student accounts, full participation in campus life and initiatives provides opportunities for leadership development, social and cultural awareness, and replacement of family or institutional support by providing common spaces or resource networks and channels for reaching out to communities. Participation and epistemic success, they continue to argue, are dependent on negotiating the shared spaces and shared meanings pertaining to the campus

experience. It is the latter, which would enable the creation of a shared institutional culture. (Cross and Johnson (2008: 281)

3.6.3.4 Curriculum Alignment

To ensure the quality of learning all institutions of Higher Education Institutions require to redesign or align their curriculum to support today's students to fit globally. (www.ferris.edu/alliance) *Because higher education institutions are more diverse in terms of culture, religion, beliefs, etc, my view is that curriculum should be aligned in such a way and to such an extent that it is inclusive of the broader institution's community.* Therefore, no students will be lagging through curriculum alignment; all of them can compete equally in this globalization era.

3.6.3.5 Positive narratives of an inclusive society of the future

Ferris' view (www.ferris.edu/alliance) *is that the creation of positive narratives of an inclusive society of the future and enabling each member of society to share, understand and contribute to those narratives is a very essential condition.* Potent narratives on the future can act like drawing society towards its envisioned future. A society with no vision for the future indicates a society in decline. This truth probably stems from the Christian Bible, in the book of Proverbs (29:18) where Solomon states that: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Societies that maintain a unity of purpose, or a shared vision embraced by the community, and encourage broad-based stakeholder participation in the formulation of that goal, will be more inclusive as every member will be working synergistically towards a unified objective.

3.6.4 Technological Conditions

3.6.4.1 Increased Capacity for Connectivity

According to Ferris (www.ferris.edu/alliance) if technologies like internet and its associated technologies can increase the capacity of a lecturer more quickly, easily, and more scalable to help students get access and connections to content, context, and community resulting in more powerful learning experience it is proof of favourable technological conditions towards fostering social cohesion. Pedagogy should be individually tailored and delivered through the new technologies such as the Web.

Interaction should be between student-student; student-author, and student-teacher. Teachers are primarily playing the role of guides in this regard.

3.6.4.2 Equal access to public information and communication technology

Access to information is one of the key pillars in a democracy, and therefore entrenched in the country's constitution allowing for freedom of expression and as such opening for dialogue and various other platforms of engagement/interaction. (Figueroa, et al, 2002:8; Altbach & Petterson, 2003:64). Equal access to public information plays an important role in creating an inclusive society, as it will make popular participation possible with well-informed members of society. Information that pertains to the society, such as what a community owns, generates, or benefits from, should be made available to all. Literature of Dutta (2011:243) advises that collective participation, through accepted representations of all classes and backgrounds, in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community activities should be sought after. Publication/information sharing and increasing the accessibility of the community's activities will eliminate doubts and suspicions which could otherwise create a sense of exclusion. Due to the fast rate of development in almost all sectors, information and communication technology appears to become the bloodline that gives life to development across various sectors. Its role is to such an extent that without it, there is no life in such sectors. Apart from other mass media channels, social media can be used as an effective tool in creating favourable forums to inform members of the community. (Dutta 2011:244)

3.6.5 Environmental Conditions

Emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to the supporting environment.

3.6.5.1 Universal access to public infrastructure and facilities

To encourage all-inclusive participation, there must be universal access to public infrastructure and facilities such as university community and resource centres with internet facilities, recreational facilities, etc. These are some of the basic services which will create, when partly or fully put into place, conditions for the university community/society to have a sense of belonging by not suffering the painful

consequence of being unable to afford them. As long as both the advantaged and disadvantaged have equal access to or benefit from these public facilities and services, they will all feel less burdened by their differences in socio-economic status, thus alleviating a possible sense of exclusion or frustration. Dutta (2011:245). What many institutions tend to ignore is the importance of communication in bringing people together.

3.6.5.2 Addressing unequal power relations

In this regard it is important to note though, that access by students and staff alone does not necessarily ensure use of public facilities, as unequal relations within university and college communities and households may inhibit the use of facilities by vulnerable groups. Dutta (2011:245) Addressing the unequal power relations is therefore a necessary step to increase participation.

3.6.5.3 Safety and Security

Maintaining the Safety and security of all individuals and their living environment is paramount in creating a feeling of inclusion and an atmosphere of participation in the university society. Various institutions of higher learning experience various forms of violence and other criminal activities, depending on their environments. The political environment in Kenyan Universities is known for threats of terrorist attacks from their neighbouring Somalia, (Kenyan Ministry of Education Strategic Plan, 2013:19) whilst others in Europe have experienced mass killings, etc. (OECD Report, www.oecd.org)

3.6.6 Legal Conditions

3.6.6.1 Respect for all human rights, freedoms, and the rule of law

As a pre-requisite, respect for all human rights, freedoms, and the rule of law, are fundamental at all levels. Figueroa et al (2002:4) Irrespective of what his or her economic resources, political status, or social standing is, everyone must be treated equally under the law of the institution. Legal instruments ensure the guiding principles that will guarantee equity, justice and equal opportunities for all. Violators of human rights should be brought to justice. The judiciary which serves to protect just societies must be impartial, accountable, and inclusive to giving weight to the opinions of those who defend the inclusiveness of the society at the local, regional, and national levels.

3.6.6.2 Inclusive legal, regulatory and policy frameworks

Legal, regulatory and policy frameworks must be inclusive, and uphold and promote just and inclusive processes in all areas of implementation, so that equal access to education, public space, facilities, and information are ensured, and diversity and cultural pluralism are respected and accommodated. Conditions vary from one institution to another, depending on the context within which they prevail. Whatsoever the context, according to Figueroa et al (2002:5) communication gurus at a recent conference on Communication and Social Change unanimously agreed that main conditions favourable to foster social cohesion are that:

Communication for social cohesion should be empowering, horizontal (versus top-down), give a voice to the previously unheard members of the community, and be biased towards local content and ownership; Communities should be the agents of their own change; Emphasis should shift from persuasion and the transmission of information from outside technical experts to dialogue, debate and negotiation on issues that resonate with members of the community; and Emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to social norms, policies, culture and the supporting environment. Figueroa et al (2002:5)

3.7. THREATS FACING ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIAL COHESION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Most societies have almost no choice but to live with the strains and stresses caused by divisions and potential divisions. As such, many community members become aware that such divisions could pose potential threats to social cohesion. Furthermore, during this era almost no society is without ethnic and cultural diversity. The question is how to manage diversity so that it becomes a source of mutual enrichment rather than a factor of division and conflict. Social and crime problems may make people feel less secure in their daily lives. Others again see growing multiculturalism as a threat to traditional identities. (Bastedo, 2008:123)

3.7.1 Political Threats

Political threats are perhaps the main types found where issues of social cohesion are dealt with. These may take various forms, depending on the situation prevailing especially in the country where the institution of higher learning is situated.

3.7.1.1 Brexit

One can never rule out the fact that European countries and their Institutions of higher education did not face any political threats before the formation of the European Union. In fact, it was the challenges they faced, which led to the realisation that they indeed need each other, hence the formation of the European Union. (Adams, 2018:3) (www.euresearch.ch) However, apparent divisions amongst some and potential threats led to Britain announcing its 'exit' leaving huge dents in higher education institutions, whose role is core in the European Union. (www.euresearch.ch) Therefore Brexit is perhaps the most outstanding threat to social cohesion central to all others related thereto. When (and if) Britain announces a coherent, cohesive plan for withdrawing from the EU, the aftereffects on the nation's higher education system are likely to be serious. According to Adams (2018:3) the country has already seen a decline in the number of EU students applying for places, and the uncertainty of the withdrawal process could see those numbers drop even further as time goes.

European Research found that opportunities for British students to study in the EU as well as participation in European projects could also become more difficult. (www.euresearch.ch) On the other side, a recent EU decision to let Switzerland re-enter Horizon 2020 only came about after the country allowed full free-movement rights to people from the EU and EEA. This suggests that the border controls the UK government is pushing for will restrict UK access to such projects. (www.euresearch.ch)

3.7.1.2 Elections in Various European Countries

National elections taking place in several countries like the Netherlands, France, Germany, etc, could bring major political change across Europe. Threatening here is predominantly the issue around the stability of the European Union in that if more countries with far-right Eurosceptic leaders withdraw it could spell political tensions and the end of freedom of movement both inside and outside universities in the bloc, in addition to other, more worrying, policies. (www.euresearch.ch) (Adams, 2018:3) Geer Wilders of Netherlands, for example, has proposed banning the Qur'an, taxing headscarves, and forbidding the construction of mosques, and is in favour of leaving the EU (nauseatingly known as 'Nexit'). In France, Marine Le Pen has a strong stance on immigration, declaring France full, criticised multiculturalism and threatens to leave the EU, and in Germany, the far-right Alternative für Deutschland party could possibly cause a significant political shift in the nation. (www.euresearch.ch)

Should any of these candidates or political parties come to power, it could spell the beginning of the end for the EU and the resulting effect on higher education in the region would be momentous, with many research projects, partnerships, and exchanges reliant on the bloc's freedom of movement and pooled resources. Moreover, it would further have a huge impact on especially students, academia, and other immigrants from Islamic background in that they would be excluded/marginalised based on their belief and culture.

3.7.1.3 Shortage of Experienced Academia and Operational Staff

Regarding the situation in Kenya, Prolonged freeze on employment by the ruling party could lead to a shortage of experienced academic and operational staff to properly drive the institution's goals towards social cohesion. (Kenyan Ministry of Education Strategic Plan, 2013:19)

3.7.1.4 Political interference/disturbance

High levels of corruption and unemployment can never be ruled out as they are almost found all over the world and may demotivate students (Kenyan Ministry of Education Strategic Plan, 2013:19) Political interference/disturbance firstly, in the

selection/deployment of Chancellors, Vice Chancellors and Council members appointments by a particular political party (MMU – 2016:9). This leads to governing parties dictating how the university's curriculum should look like to achieve their political aims and objectives and as such score political points. This goes also with election fever, which usually causes focus on goals to change impeding the University's transition. (MMU – 2016:10) This threatens the achievement of social cohesion, because the university community members do not all belong to the same political affiliations, because of their different views.

3.7.2 Economic Threats

3.7.2.1 Continuous disparities of wealth between the rich and the poor

There are in all society's disparities of wealth between rich and poor people. So, when these disparities are excessive, or tending to increase, cohesion is threatened. Because of unstable economies many community members become doubtful as their future welfare is becoming more uncertain – a threat for social cohesion. In a study conducted by Bastedo (2003:124) most of the Dutch students and academics acknowledge that students from so-called "black schools" are far less likely to have the financial resources to succeed at the university, but they do not see any appropriate role by which the university should address the problem. Excluding minorities and ignoring the educational inequities is a great threat to social cohesion in many instances. This I see as a deliberate attempt to exclude/deny black students access - a clear threat to access to facilities and as such limits the possibilities of a balanced and socially cohesive university community.

3.7.2.2 Less or withdrawal of Financial Injection into/amongst universities

In line with the view above, Brexit could affect the financial injection in some institutions in the European Union in terms of sending students to study at universities of their counterparts within the EU as well as affecting development in research within such institutions. Furthermore, unless a new agreement is made in whatsoever form, once Britain has withdrawn, it will lead to EU students being charged international fees and they will also become ineligible for loans. Dissidence by many will undoubtedly follow and potentially damage the income of the sector and the diversity of university campuses of involved countries. (www.euresearch.ch)

3.7.3 Social threats

3.7.3.1 Unwillingness/Lack of Cooperation

Social threats posed include unwillingness of certain groups (social mobility) especially after having been influenced by key role players, not to participate in matters which could bring about social cohesion. This could be because of a lack of mutual respect, which according to Pfaff, Baxter, and Jack (2014:1148) leads to a break in communication. Consequently, non-participation could lead to social exclusivity. The unavailability, insufficiency and/or incorrect use of social capital poses another threat; difficulty to access resources; the lack of commitment; and lastly, even if all the above are available, ineffective, or non-implementation could also pose a huge threat to the achievement of social cohesion, especially where the communication is poor. Negative criticism because of un-forgiveness in the sense of who is to blame for the prevailing status quo of matters could also threaten the realisation of social cohesion. Furthermore, according to the HEFCE (Embracing Excellence in Education, 2003:4), there is a perceived threat to academic freedoms that any 'management' or 'business' methodologies may bring, which together with the clash between collegiality and managerialism, could give rise to cultural challenges and threats and an evaluation of just what higher education is all about.

HEFCE, (2003:4) advice universities to be more responsive when offering a new study programme or course. To act globally in a competitive environment, the Higher Education Institutions must offer socially and academically inclusive programs to students that will cover their needs and wishes, and they can also provide interdisciplinary programs to meet the 21st century's higher education demands. Higher Education Institutions need to reformat and reorganize courses, programs, and structures to increasingly sophisticated and market-knowledgeable students. As students are paying more so their demands have increased in course and quality and higher education should respond to their demands.

However, to make mobility feasible, it is essential to assure mutual recognition of degrees and credit points while at the same time allowing for individuality and diversity. To ensure the quality of learning all institutions of Higher Education require to redesign

or align their curriculum to support today's students to fit globally. Therefore, no students will be lagging through curriculum alignment; all of them can compete equally in this globalization era. (HEFCE, 2003:5)

3.7.3.2 Excluding minorities and ignoring the educational inequities

Excluding minorities and ignoring the educational inequities is a great threat to social cohesion in many instances. Reminiscent to Heyneman (2002) here, is the failure of Dutch universities to adequately address the integration of immigrants. A point demonstrating this is for example many Dutch educators who understand that social tension in the Netherlands could be ameliorated by greater social mobility for immigrants, but generally fail to see a role for higher education in addressing the problem, because admission to the university is considered "open" or blind to racial, religious, or ethnic background.

As stated above in a study conducted by Bastedo (2008:120) most of the Dutch students and academics acknowledge that students from so-called black schools are far less likely to have the training, qualifications, or more so, financial resources to succeed at the university, but they do not see any appropriate role by which the university should address the problem. Crouch, (2001) alerts that the fact is that faculty in the Netherlands do not see "the university" as a singular entity, but rather as a more federal configuration or even as a group of separate colleges that are little more than co-located or cohesive. Whilst that being the case, the COE Report (2004) found that others again see growing multiculturalism as a threat to traditional identities and at the same time, new threats and risks of poverty and exclusion are emerging, such as inadequate access to new information and communication technologies or to privatised utilities. Despite excellent examples of successful affirmative action programs in other settings (Crouch, 2001), many European educators fail to grasp or are even hostile to the idea of augmenting the university's role in social cohesion.

3.7.3.3 Participation does not always entail cooperation nor consensus

However, on the other side, after noticing that communities are not necessarily harmonious and that in some instances participation may deepen divisions, Servaes (1996:23) admits that participation does not always entail cooperation nor consensus. It can often mean conflict and usually poses a threat to existent structures. He warns

therefore that Rigid and general strategies for participation are therefore neither possible nor desirable. Although it is largely the ideal for social cohesion in a higher education institution, diversifying university populations could also pose threats in terms of what issues will be taught and researched at universities. As feminist scholars attest, gender and women's issues receive scant attention when student and faculty ranks are dominated by men, especially in various institutions of higher education in Europe (Gumpert, 1988).

3.7.3.4 Improper inclusive student and faculty access policies

European Research found that opportunities for British students to study in the EU as well as participation in European projects could also become more difficult. On the other side, a recent EU decision to let Switzerland re-enter Horizon 2020 only came about after the country allowed full free-movement rights to people from the EU and EEA. This suggests that the border controls the UK government is pushing for will restrict UK access to such projects. (www.euresearch.ch). However, it should be recognized that improper inclusive student and faculty access policies present threats. For example, bringing speakers of minority languages to universities may heighten debates over the language of instruction. Also mixing students from different cultural, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds may in some cases even exacerbate patterns of intolerance if university resources are not allocated properly to prepare for these kinds of changes – a threat with dire and/or even irreparable consequences.

3.7.4 Technological Threats

3.7.4.1 Continuous Changing Technology

O' Donohue (2000:110) mentions some shadow elements that threaten our broader and deeper sense of belonging: “We are on a runaway train, bedazzled by technology, a postmodern culture, consumerism, and the functionalist mind. We are indeed creating and choosing our own prisons!” O' Donohue (2000:110)

3.7.4.2 Information and Communications Technology, Competition, and the Markets

Secondly, Information and Communications Technology enabled systems used increasingly together with e-learning results into stronger competition in a range of markets, both locally and globally, bringing about various opportunities for people to study in ways in which higher education may traditionally not have been able to support. (HEFCE, 2003:4). These technological changes and the development of the information and learning societies warrant the embracing of continual change and development. With new developments in technological and other sectors new risks of poverty and exclusion are emerging, such as inadequate access to new information and communication technologies.

3.7.5 Environmental Threats

3.7.5.1 Perceived Quality, Diversification in an Increased Complex Competitive Market Environment

Like in any sector's environment the changing higher education environment facing major challenges, the notion of quality becomes a distinguishing labelling tool with potentially powerful effects. Ferreira (2003:16) warns that one can expect that the international higher education environment will become more competitive and more diversified in future, and that perceived quality will become the decisive criterion for students and stakeholders in an increasingly complex market. According to the HEFCE (2003:4), competition from other organisations entering the higher education market by developing company-based learning environments for large workforces provides a threat to many higher education institutions, to keep abreast with producing diverse students with diverse skills relevant to what the global markets require.

3.7.5.2 Crime, Safety and Security

Social and crime problems may make people feel less secure in their environments. Doubts about the sustainability of social security systems also give many the feeling that their future welfare is becoming more uncertain, which could lead to students deregistering and/or exchanging their institution of higher learning or and even their studies for a better alternative.

3.7.6 Legal Threats

Attached to almost every action taken and every decision made in furtherance of the mission are a host of potential legal and policy issues which, if ignored, can lead to negative outcomes that threaten to divert attention, drain resources, harm reputation, and impede progress. The question therefore begs as to what legal issues pose severe threats that will demand attention in the future? Research done by Kaplin et al (2016:9) identified the top threats or concerns as:

1. Non-compliance with legislation relating to disabled people and gender issues.
2. Denying equal participation in educational or related activities in terms of the law especially by institutions receiving funds.
3. In today's increasingly litigious society, universities face a variety of serious legal concerns that impact the organization. Included are matters of student discipline, institutional and personal liability, discrimination and harassment, considerations of race and diversity, managing complex federal student financial aid programs, and now campus safety concerns as well.

Kaplin et al (2016:9) furthermore adds that the most common legal threats trending in higher education include (1) increasing regulation from federal agencies; (2) expansion of online education; (3) increasing higher education international programs and globalization; (4) proliferation of adjunct faculty unions; and (5) increased public/private partnerships and entrepreneurship by administration and faculty.

The issue of Brexit probably cuts across all sectors and from a legal perspective, it leads to the European Union's amendment of legislation to exclude Britain, which further leads to changing university rules/policies and other related matters. This could cause conflict/divisions amongst university communities threatening the achievement of social cohesion.

3.8 INDICATORS OF SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING SOCIAL COHESION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Indicators of success include publicly available policy/standards of staff and student conduct in the form of codes of conduct; Multiple Sources of Finances aside from Government should be sought; Curriculum that reflects social problems. Students and

faculty who are broadly representative of the wider population, A transparent process of adjudication for misconduct. Altbach & Peterson (2003:64). In line with what is proposed by Figueroa, et al (2002:14), indicators of success in achieving social cohesion through communication mentioned above, cut across: A Sense of belonging, Feelings of Morale, Goal Consensus, Trust, Reciprocity, and Network Cohesion.

3.8.1 Political Indicators

3.8.1.1 Publicly available policy/standards of staff and student conduct in the form of codes of conduct

Because of the diversity of the university and especially that of the student population, different students from different cultural, religious, and geographical backgrounds, diverse behavioural patterns are found, especially in universities of countries where democracy is the order of the day. Unlike in most traditional and colonial countries, where the university's policies/legislation is derived from the governing party of the country, in this regard, publicly available policy/standards of staff and student conduct in the form of codes of conduct, etc, are critical for regulation of campus life. Altbach and Peterson (2002:64) It is codes of conduct that help students and staff to be able to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. According to Altbach and Peterson (2002:64) codes of conduct are mostly found in OECD Countries. It therefore just makes common sense that a university which has clearly and publicly advertised codes of conduct lowers the risk and suspicion of corruption.

3.8.1.2 Goal Consensus

Goal consensus is mainly derived from the vision and mission of the University, which is further derived from the political system of the country. As such, this is done within the parameters of the Constitution of the country. Therefore, Goal consensus as another indicator according to Figueroa, et al (2002:14) indicates the degree to which members of the community agree firstly, on the importance of each problem or issue facing the community, and secondly, on the objectives to be achieved by the community. In this regard agreement assumes shared knowledge, whereas non-agreement/non-consensus regarding an issue obviously indicates division. However,

before members of the higher education institution's community can reach an agreement regarding priorities and goals, they must know what the issues are and what objectives have been set. This is especially viewed as essential as recommended by scholars like Kincaid (1993:112) through his convergence approach model of communication.

3.8.2. Economic Indicators

3.8.2.1 Multiple Financial (Re)sources apart from Government

This according to Altbach and Peterson (2003:74) is done because of their aspiration to augment the three elements of quality of programmes, access thereto and equal representation amongst their community members. This cannot happen when government is the sole provider of finances and therefore warrants Multiple Sources of Finances apart from Government to be sought. This largely helps to diversify their sources of revenue for their day-to-day operations. Such approach helps to support multiple individual and collaborative projects/activities and educate diverse students through apprenticeships, develop new knowledge, and often design and pilot new programmes. The more a university can finance its own educational objectives, the more impact it is likely to have for social cohesion amongst its community members.

3.8.3. Environmental Indicators

3.8.3.1 Sense of belonging

The environment in which any creature lives plays a crucial role in creating a sense of belonging for it. (Figueroa, 2002:15). I view a sense of belonging as the extent to which individual members feel they are an important part of the community where they live, in terms of both the physical university environment and community and can relate to each other for survival and various other reasons. This is when members of the university community feel they belong by being taken into consideration in terms of participating in decision-making and processes of activities affecting them. I also view a social cohesive environment as an environment in which the safety and security of the university community is regarded as high priority; secondly, unlike in many universities where the environment is one-sided, in this regard the layout of an

environment representative of the various cultures, religions/belief systems through various artefacts, signs, symbols, statues, etc, is indicative of social cohesion amongst the members of that institution. Thirdly, buildings and other facilities that are equally accessible for the disabled are indicative of inclusivity, which is one of the pillars of social cohesion. Given the fact that a large amount of especially the student population, is from other towns and cities, these factors mentioned above in essence create a friendly and welcoming environment and as such a sense of belonging and togetherness in their residences as their second home.

3.8.3.2 Feelings of Morale

Having created a sense of belonging would subsequently show the extent to which members of the institution's community are happy, content, and proud of being members thereof. Most of the community members here are willing to share responsibility for making the community a better place to live in. For the university community to genuinely care about one another, have respect for humanity, one another's culture, religion/belief, assets, etc. is critical and an outstanding indicator in a cohesive society, especially where democracy is the order of the day.

3.8.4. Social Indicators

3.8.4.1 Social trust

Trust to me is a phenomenon that varies from one individual to another and from one group to another. This includes friendship, relationship, family, collegiality, etc. More specifically, the general confidence that one has in the integrity, ability and good character of other people indicates the existence of social trust. It is therefore an indicator of social cohesion because it serves the purpose of the glue that holds the institution's community together and makes cooperative action possible. Community members are comfortable giving other people responsibility for project tasks even when they cannot monitor what others do. One last indicator of social trust is when members of the group have confidence in one another, rely on one another and not

doubt each other's influence on issues affecting the development and welfare of the community. (Dutta, 2011:245)

3.8.4.2 Social reciprocity

A fifth indicator of social cohesion is social reciprocity, which is when members of the university community mutually interchange favours, privileges, and benefits. For example, if a student struggles to make ends meet in terms of food, others may share some of theirs with him or even donate money to help him; another may be falling behind with a project/assignment and could be assisted by his fellows e.g., by typing it to save time and the favour would be returned at a later stage in whatsoever form. Democratically spoken, students may even go to an extent of disregarding their own right and instead view it as their responsibility to help one another.

3.8.4.3 Curriculum that reflects upon social problems

The curriculum of an institution, I believe, is a compass that guides a student into the direction of the field/career he intends to go. Curriculum that is inclusive further prepares a student to be able to work with diverse people. Heyneman, et al (2003:68) emphasise therefore that curricula that is inclusive and address especially contemporary social problems is a good indicator of change and social cohesion. As such, students and academics should therefore consider current issues from several disciplinary perspectives and discuss various responses, perceptions towards solutions. If curricula remain sanitized of relevant social concerns, students and faculty members will likely see the university as irrelevant and irresponsible. A democratic view of education must consider the importance of preparing citizens to understand, debate, and take a position on vital social issues as a central role and rationale of a higher education institution.

Generally, socially relevant curricula according to literature are found to be possible in almost any discipline and therefore can also take many forms. Discussion of current social problems can be in sociological or historical perspectives, service-learning

courses, specific "social problem" classes, community outreach projects, and the supervision of students' independent research projects. Regardless of how such programs are instituted, such activity works best when implemented within the context of a critical-thinking educational environment. Moreover, such programs are much more effective when they are supported by policymakers as well as faculty. For this reason, concerned academia should emphasize inter-sector synergy when attempting to build support for curricular reform.

3.8.4.4 Students and faculty who are broadly representative of the wider population

Altbach and Peterson (2003:71) are further of the view that both vertical and horizontal social capitals are created when access to higher education is opened to all groups, especially for less dominant groups. When minority access is prioritized, social cohesion can be significantly improved. However, in South Africa, the situation is just the opposite, where the majority had been excluded from certain universities and even from certain faculties and fields such as science, medicine, etc by the then apartheid government. Many are still being excluded for various reasons.

3.8.5. Technological Indicator

3.8.5.1 Network cohesion

According to Kincaid (1993:113) the density of the network of communication of all individuals in a group or community as well as the centrality of the network based on the distance of all individuals to one another is an indicator of the possibility of social cohesion in the university community. Kincaid (1993:113) goes further and defines Network Cohesion as a phenomenon which exists in a "bounded network or clique with a high level of internal cohesion, usually in terms of the density or connectedness of the links of information exchange among its members" Distinction is therefore made between a social network, which consists of all of the dyads or pairs of individuals (or groups) within a community that are linked by some form of social relationship (kinship, friendship, economic tie, etc.), while a communication network consists of all of the

dyads or pairs of individuals (or groups) within a community that are linked by information exchange.

3.8.5.2 Pedagogy tailored and delivered through relevant technology

Furthermore Ferris (www.ferris.edu/alliance) adds that a pedagogy that is tailored in such a way that it is delivered through technologies such the web, facilitates interaction between student-student, student-author, and student-staff with the aim and objectives of bringing about social/network cohesion. A last technological indicator is the expansion of online education to reach all including the poorest of the poor and previously disadvantaged as well as the disabled with platforms where group discussions, dialogue, debate, etc is facilitated, strengthens bonds between students even if they are not together in person at a particular time. Based upon that, whilst information can free the university community from narrow-mindedness and linear thinking, I agree with Ferris (www.ferris.edu/alliance) that, together with technology, they can and will liberate them.

3.8.6. Legal Indicators

3.8.6.1 A transparent process of adjudication for misconduct

A transparent process of adjudication for misconduct is a good indicator of fairness and equal treatment of all, irrespective of race, gender, class, seniority, etc. Justice should prevail during disciplinary processes of those accused of breaking the rules/code of conduct. Policy and punitive measures of what happens when someone is accused of breaking the rules/code of conduct, should be clearly stated in clear and comprehensible language and as Altbach and Peterson (2003:74) stated earlier on policy/standards of staff and student conduct in the form of codes of conduct, etc, should be publicly available for everyone. I believe that if such are publicly available, even new students, staff and even visitors would be able to align themselves accordingly in terms of their behaviour and subsequently reduce the risk of unbecoming behaviour that could have dire consequences.

Taken together, these outcomes determine the capacity for cooperative action in a community “to solve their own problems themselves” (Dagrón, 2009:453). It should, however, be noted that this is a learning process, which increases the university community’s overall capacity for future collective action, and increases its belief in, and value for, continual improvement.

3.9. CONCLUSION

A cohesive society is one which has developed satisfactory ways of coping with strains in an open and democratic manner. This means taking action to reduce inequalities and restore equity so that various divisions remain manageable and do not grow to threaten the stability of society. For purposes of this study, Literature reviewed shows that there is a very strong link between communication and social change and more so social cohesion. Before confirming that link, it shows that two main pillars constitute communication of human life. Firstly, verbal communication consists of the spoken word and the written word and sounds related thereto. These two main types constitute language, which is playing a core role in humans’ social interaction during the communication process. This goes hand-in-hand with meaning conveyed during communication whose attachment depends on either a process of connotation or denotation. Depending on various factors such as the context, culture, environment, etc. the individual finds himself in, this can happen either in the form of private meaning or shared meaning.

Secondly, unlike verbal communication that is sound-related, nonverbal communication deals with communication by gestures/body movements, by space, time, artefacts/cosmetics, touch, non-phonemic properties, and smell. What verbal and nonverbal communication have in common is semiotics, which focuses on the use of signs, signals, and symbols during communication, which is also to a large extent a link between the two. It is clear in the reviewed literature that components of both verbal and nonverbal communication largely complement each other during the process of communication. Therefore, without these two pillars there is no social interaction.

My further observation is that social interaction of such communication components constitutes behaviour of individuals or group. Behaviour of individuals or groups is largely informed by their perception. Perception on its part again, is largely informed by the culture of the individual or groups. To determine how culture and nonverbal communication relate to each other, Neuliep [2000:16] succinctly describes culture as “a nonverbal symbol system”, which, together with its related verbal communication, in my view distinguishes one culture from another and as such one group from another. Notwithstanding such distinctions made, the basis of a democratic society like for example that of South Africa, is “unity in diversity” (Chaskalson, 1996:1), a motto that calls upon every individual and group of society to work towards social cohesion.

Various paradigms developed over decades led to different approaches taken in bringing about social change/cohesion and as such brought about different outcomes. The dominant paradigm rejected the notion that developing countries are able of even identifying the problems causing their suffering let alone finding a solution to them. (Sparks, 2007:29.) Using a top-down approach, Rogers (1969:6) noticed that victims of poverty are never the change agent, but change is “caused by outsiders, who seek to introduce new ideas to achieve definite goals”, capacitating them to emulate without permitting them to create. Shah (2011:6) and various others criticised modernization theory for simply not working or considering the social structures of developing countries.

Following the dominant paradigm, the Imperialist paradigm is largely based upon dependency theory and challenges the idea that individuals are passive receivers of information and can be manipulated by it. Instead, people interpret these media products through their existing culture, which for Tomlinson (1991:173) is the resource “through which people generate narratives of individual and social meaning and purpose”. This paradigm in my view is not of help to this study as it does not have an element of emancipation of society. Just like the dominant paradigm, it also follows a linear top-down approach of colonialism and was rejected for its outdatedness and failure to address the need of society in bringing about social cohesion.

Because the Participatory Paradigm is a 'joint venture' between various affected stakeholders of the community of that higher education institution, my view is that it warrants a particular strategic approach. In this regard, this to me, bodes well with what UNICEF (2005:1) proposes, namely that the Freirian approach proves to be the best and most acceptable, which aims at the communication process to be research-based, to achieve development goals. Mozammel and Schechter (2007:7) add that it underscores that communication is as much a science as an art, as much a process as it is about outcomes. Strategically speaking, therefore setting goals, both midterm and long-term, is an important step to measure the success or failure of any programme including that of development initiatives. This will be dealt with in more detail in a later Chapter when dealing with methodological issues relating to strategy, communication, and social cohesion.

Therefore, social cohesion can happen by means of participatory development communication (Servaes, 2001:5) through a process of community dialogue leading to collective action that affects the welfare of individual members and automatically and collectively, that of the community (White, 2003:51).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed literature relating to the field of Communication and Social Cohesion in the previous Chapter, this Chapter focuses on methodology to research about the situation relating to social cohesion in a higher education institution. Informed by the nature of the study, it dictates that a qualitative approach be taken to achieve its aim and objectives and as such ultimately arrive at the answer to the research question. By definition, “qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency”. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011:10). Qualitative research, according to Cresswell (2014:15) is therefore an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.

Because this is a communication study, we look at the role of communication in bringing about social cohesion in a higher education institution, and the focus here is upon the University of the Free State. Since communication is viewed as a process between two or more people or groups, it implies participation of two or more people or groups. As such the study warrants participatory action research (PAR) as qualitative approach, which is defined by Babbie and Mouton (2017:645) as “an approach that is based upon the people’s role in setting the agendas, participating in the data gathering and analysis, and controlling the use of outcomes”. Additionally, Participatory Action Research postulates participation to the extent of shared ownership of the research enterprise.

In doing justice to this Chapter, a brief history of the various approaches/paradigms of communication research follows, to arrive at the ultimate approach of participatory action research. For purposes of this study, I combine Participatory Action Research with the Harbemasian approach of Communicative Action (Habermas, 1984:100) and call it COPAR (Communicative Participatory Action Research). This approach is

unpacked in terms of its nature and process, which according to Mahlomaholo (2015:13) and Babbie and Mouton (2017:330) includes the Formulation of a team; the Focus Group Common Vision; Priorities for Strategic Plan; Priority Activities; Responsible persons; Resources; Timeframe and Monitoring. Notwithstanding the above, Du Plooy (2017:339) advocates for a communicative perspective when dealing with the process within the context of a study of this nature.

Since the aim of the study is to look at how communication could be used to foster social cohesion, various researchers such as Waisbord (2000:2) found that when dealing with issues that simultaneously involves Communication and Participatory Action, the ultimate result is developmental. It is for this reason that discussion in this Chapter revolves in my view around an all-encompassing Developmental Communicative Participatory Action Research. As such this Chapter also looks at the unfolding of different paradigms of communication and social cohesion over time from a developmental perspective. These include the dominant paradigm, the imperialist paradigm and the participatory paradigm based upon literature amongst others, Shannon and Weaver (1949), Marx (1843), Weber (1958) Durkheim (1958), Freire (1970:217), Habermas (1984:100) Servaes and Malikhao (2005).

4.2 COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL COHESION

Social Cohesion is a phenomenon many countries want to achieve amongst their citizens and institutions using various methodological approaches, models and or strategies, which continuously prove to be either partially or totally ineffective in addressing the needs of the people as far as inclusivity is concerned. Literature indicates that for decades Communication was not considered and recognised as a field or discipline let alone its role in fostering social cohesion. However, its ultimate recognition saw it evolving through various models, theories, and other related research contributions, with emphasis on its societal/community developmental nature.

4.2.1 Paradigms/Approaches of Communication for Social Cohesion

Various paradigms had been developed over the years to bring about social cohesion. It should, however, be noted that the development of different paradigms and/or

approaches for social cohesion based upon the said models, theories and other related research were viewed by scholars as having the desired one-sided results for situations in particular countries and others not. To shed light upon this, Sparks (2007:3) distinguishes between the dominant paradigm, the imperialist paradigm, the participatory paradigm, and the global paradigm.

4.2.1.1 Dominant Paradigm

The dominant paradigm, or modernization theory, derives some of its thinking from the works of Max Weber (1958/1904), who contributed the success of Western nations to a culture that valued entrepreneurial mind-sets and hard work. Contrary to that, they believed that underdeveloped nations, on the other hand, suffer from a culture of poverty and that their people were poor, because they had poor work habits and ethics. Scholars such as Lerner (1958:79) view nations in such countries, especially those in Africa, as superstitious, inflexible, and traditional – a mentality they believe, is binding them to poverty and subsequent backwardness. To develop underdeveloped countries, Lerner (1958:79) suggested that they adopt a modern, rational mentality like the West. Therefore, because the problem of underdeveloped regions was believed by modernists from the West to be an information problem, communication was presented as the instrument that would solve it. However, the problem I seem to have with Lerner and others, is the seemingly narrow-mindedness of their approach. Their view is based upon elements of one-way, linear, traditional, and modernist models of communication as advocated by the likes of Shannon and Weaver (1949), Berlo (1960), Schramm (1964), as Sender-Message-Receiver-Channel.

An approach taken during the dominant paradigm is that traditional media are typically used to send out persuasive messages of development based upon universal notions of development situated in Western hegemony (Melkote and Steeves, 2001; Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte, 2006). According to Dutta (2011:38) the underlying idea is to emphasise the modernisation of third world spaces and to carry out development through the diffusion of behaviours at the individual level that are identified as problematic, and hence in need of change. Persuasive campaigns are strategically developed with the goals of changing individuals, which then would lead to aggregate-level societal changes. The emphasis is on developing the scholarly science of

persuasion that would guide strategies used in development campaigns. (Dutta 2011:38)

This stems from Rogers' (1983) Diffusion of Innovations approach, which according to Waisbord (2000:2), became one of the world's most influential approaches to an extent that it has ruled development communication for decades and became the blueprint for communication activities in development. The intention was to understand the adoption of new behaviours and the premise was that innovations diffuse over time according to five individuals' stages through which an individual pass in the adoption of innovations, namely awareness, knowledge and interest, decision, trial, and adoption/rejection.

For Rogers (1983:7), development communication is a "process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intent to change his behaviour. Usually, the source wants to alter the receiver's knowledge of some idea, create, or change his attitude toward the idea, or persuade him to adopt the idea as part of his regular behaviour" (Rogers, 1983:7). Examples my knowledge serves me with, include Britain, which colonised South Africa until 1910; France which colonised Congo and Germany which colonised Namibia.

The role of the media then could never be ignored or undermined when dealing with the diffusion of innovations as, in my view, it played a core role in the process of increasing awareness amongst the targeted individuals or groups. In that regard Waisbord (2001) notes that it was the media-centrism and "magic bullet" theory of effects that underpinned earlier analyses for such purposes then. Although the former and the latter had an impact on people's perceptions to a certain extent, Lazarsfeld and Katz (1955) (in Waisbord, 2000:) found that it is interpersonal relations that were crucial in channelling and shaping opinion.

Meanwhile, other positions suggested that the traditional model needed to integrate a process orientation that was not only focussed on the results of intervention but also to pay attention to content and address the cognitive dimensions and not just behaviour. It was because of these and many other related findings that Schramm and Rogers recognized that early views had individualistic and psychological biases and

that it was therefore necessary to be sensitive to the specific sociocultural environment in which communication took place, which was an issue that was neglected in early analyses. This according to Hornik (1988:10) in Waisbord (2000:3) led to it and other related insights to be incorporated into diffusion studies, which proposed that both exposures to mass media and face-to-face interaction were necessary to induce effective change. My understanding of Hornik's (1988:10) view in Waisbord (2000:3) is what therefore motivates change, is rather communication and culture and not necessarily much about economics. This also confirms an important finding made by Lerner and Schramm (1964:4) in their research on modernisation and diffusion of innovations. As such, a triadic model of communication was consequently recommended to include change agents, beneficiaries, and communicators. (Waisbord, 2000:3, Dutta, 2011:45)

4.2.1.2 Imperialist Paradigm

It was between the 1960s and 1970s when change in the global picture gave rise to the paradigm of imperialism, which according to Sparks (2007:11) was largely due to political unrest in various countries across the globe, informed by underdevelopment and negligence of the poor due to lack of service delivery and other related matters. At the centre of the Imperialist Paradigm is the dependency theory, formulated in Latin America and predominant in Non-Aligned Nations Movement between the 1960s and the early 1980s. Consistent with the uses-and-gratifications approach dependency theory predicts that you depend on media information to meet certain needs and achieve certain goals, but you do not depend on all media equally. (Ball-Rokeach, et al, 2001:392),

As such, Ball-Rokeach, et al (2001:392) distinguish between two factors that determine how dependent one could become on media. Firstly, you become more dependent on media that meet several of your needs than others that just satisfy only a few and one's dependence on information from a medium increase when it supplies information that is more central to you. The second source of dependence is social stability. When Social Cohesion and conflict are high, established higher education institutions, beliefs, and practices are challenged, forcing a re-evaluation and perhaps new choices in terms of media consumption. It is during the increase of media reliance and on the other hand when the situation is more stable when dependency on media

also goes down. By this I understand that the community of a higher education institution would for example, become more dependent on radio and television news during protests on the campus, and on the university's website for their examination results.

In my view, this shows that such institutions and media communicate and as Dutta (2011:43) states it, "interact with audiences be it to create needs, interests or related motives, which in turn influence various sources and subsequently lead to various dependencies". It implies that chances are that individuals who grow dependent on a particular segment will then be affected in different ways and degrees including cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally by that segment. However, be that as it may, Littlejohn and Foss (2008:302) agree that one's needs may not always be strictly personal but may be shaped by culture of various social conditions, meaning that needs, motives, and uses of communication are contingent on outside factors that may be beyond your control, which act as constraints to manipulate and/or control. Therefore, the more alternatives you have the less dependent you become on one single medium.

4.2.1.2.1 Imperial knowledge and Structures of Control

According to Dutta (2011:44) knowledge of and about Social Cohesion is a political entity that is quintessential to the project of neo-colonialism under the aegis of contemporary globalisation. Central to the circulation of colonial and neo-colonial practices is the symbolic representation of the necessity for colonization, justifying the violence of occupation, control, and exploitation carried out by the centres of knowledge production. Dutta (2011:44) emphasises that "any colonization mission is justified rhetorically by the mantra of lifting 'the burden of the soul', of delivering the primitive people of a primitive space from their savagery through communication messages of enlightenment. In line with this study Dutta (2011:44) goes further by saying that the existence of colonialism is predicated upon the dominance of epistemology of colonialism that sets up the dichotomy of the primitive and modern and operates on the very basis of that dichotomy.

Modernity is therefore juxtaposed in the backdrop of the primitive spaces of the "Third World" that needs the mantra of enlightenment. Knowledge of and about the 'third'

plays a critical role in marking out, mapping, representing, and offering strategic entry points for the colonizing mission. Dutta (2011:44) Relevant to this study is that higher education institutions together with research centres, grants, think tanks, as structures of knowledge are created and supported for purposes of carrying out the interests of colonialism and neo-colonialism under the rhetoric of Social Cohesion. As for example, in the case of South Africa, during the apartheid regime, these higher education institutions, etc as knowledge structures have been situated politically and economically as truth-producing bodies that legitimize the political economy of neo-colonialism. Dutta (2011:45) concludes that an entire industry of academic, development and marketing practices have been manufactured to ensure the production and perpetuation of symbolic resources that are at the core of colonialism and neo-colonialism. As these practices circulate the dichotomies of the developed and underdeveloped, they justify colonialism and exploitation of the poor and underdeveloped under the guise of offering aid and bringing about enlightenment and subsequently Social Cohesion.

Said (1988:1), states that West-centric productions of knowledge were quintessential to the colonialist enterprise. Knowledge served as a primary tool of colonialism mapping out colonial spaces and developing hierarchical units in the colonies to be brought under the control of colonial empires. Knowledge also offered the rhetorical base that served as the human face of colonialism, rhetorically positioning a violent occupation as an act of benevolence. Furthermore, knowledge was continuously deployed to bring the colonies under control, to civilise the subjects in the colonies, to teach the subjects the civilised ways of colonisers and to systematically erase the ways of knowing that were native to the colonised spaces. Said (1988:2) is of the view that this erasure happened through the portrayal of indigenous ways of knowing primitive as opposed to the modernity of the colonisers of which the hegemony was often accomplished through the languages of rationality, science, and medicine, positioned as the antithesis of the irrationalities of the natives.

Dutta (2011:45) states that, inherent in West-centric knowledge structures is the political economy of such knowledge structures situated in the realm of the materiality of colonialism and neo-colonialism. He is of the view that in contemporary discursive spaces, the interest of knowledge structures is weaved in with the interests of

modernity. Knowledge is therefore intrinsically linked to the mercenary interests of the dominant higher education institutions of capitalism. In their articulations of what does it mean to know the world, what are the acceptable tools for knowing the world, and what are the acceptable applications of knowledge, Dutta (2011:45) says that dominant knowledge structures, such as higher education institutions under scrutiny in this study, continue to serve the interests of the status quo.

What it tells me is that, in so doing, they are validating, privileging, and foregrounding certain forms of knowing that continue to celebrate the dominance of the western institutions over other forms of knowledge of the poor and underdeveloped societies, especially those in Africa. As a result, power differentials are continuously maintained in the realm of who comes to know the world, and who gets to be scripted as the subject of studies, as an artefact to be captured in mainstream narratives as constructed by the dominant knowledge structures. Dutta (2011:45) My understanding is that there seems to be a thin line between the dominant and imperialist paradigms and that they are largely similar in terms of having linear top-down approaches when it comes to communication in them. Just like the dominant paradigm, the imperialist paradigm is not a befitting approach when attempting to bring about social cohesion in a higher education institution, especially because of its underhanded intensions of subjecting the poor and vulnerable to be depended on the rich and developed, instead of networking and establishing mutual relationships among all in a particular community of a higher education institution.

The biasness of the Imperialist Paradigm, its linearity, carelessness, and exploitation of the poor are reasons more than enough to doubt its effectiveness in bringing about social cohesion. It was for those reasons and others that triggered the zeal in philosophers, theorists, and various other researchers to find an effective alternative to replace the imperialist paradigm. As such, the participatory paradigm was ushered into that effect.

4.2.1.3 Marxist Approach to Social Cohesion

Other than Durkheim (1858, in White, 1995:3) Marx (1870;2007) is of the view that social cohesion could be achieved through revolutionary processes in which communication plays a key role in the organising of the Social Cohesion processes.

His praxis therefore is on organising workers, drawing attention to the inequalities, oppressive conditions and the fundamental class antagonisms that exist in capitalist forms of production. Social Cohesion projects based on Marxist ideals, according to Dutta (2011:39), involve efforts of structural transformation, and therefore, communicative practices are deployed towards the goals of developing identities of organising effort, identifying, and mobilising resources, creating educational awareness programmes for the education of the proletariat in Marxist principles and organising the proletariat to participate in revolutionary practices.

4.2.1.4 Culture-centred Approach to Social Cohesion

Another approach to Social Cohesion is the culture-centred approach. This approach Dutta (2011:39) describes as envisioning the capacity of communicative processes to transform social structures, and in so doing, it attends to the subaltern sectors in bringing about Social Cohesion. Whilst noting that communicative erasures go hand in hand, Dutta (2011:40) states that the goal of the culture-centred approach is to create avenues and spaces of Social Cohesion by listening to the voices of the subaltern communities that have historically been marginalised. Participatory spaces are created so that these spaces offer constructive openings for listening to subaltern voices, foregrounding these voices in the discursive spaces of knowledge production. Dutta (2011:40) goes further that at the heart of the culture-centred approach is the theorising of the intersections between culture, structure and agency as the tripods that offer the base for meaning making and communicative enactment. In this regard, **Structure** refers to the institutional roles, rules, practices, and ways of organising that constrain and enable access to resources. **Culture** constitutes the local contexts where meanings are continuously negotiated. **Agency** is the capacity of individuals and collectives to enact their choices as they negotiate structures. The culture-centred approach builds upon subaltern studies and postcolonial theories to disrupt the hegemonic spaces of knowledge production with dialogues with the subaltern sectors that have historically been erased from the mainstream discourses of development and progress.

Whilst reviewing literature related to communication and Social Cohesion, one realises that apart from any other factors, poverty is the most common reason for certain nations to be dependent on others that are wealthy. In line with Dutta (2011:41) such

nations are mainly found within the Dominant and Imperialist Paradigms where structure, culture and agency as discussed above are strange subjects as they are anti-linear, top-down approaches and therefore against the motives of such paradigms and instead promote poverty and dependency of subalterns (poor nations) upon wealthier ones. Schiller (1976:6) adds that dependency makes poor nations become victims of cultural imperialism. Such dependency on wealthier nations makes poor nations find it difficult to formulate autonomous development policies in accordance with their own cultural histories and societal interests (Servaes, 1983:13). Therefore, the need for culturally sensitive development programmes cannot be ignored any longer as it is long overdue in many poor countries. The blame is mainly put on modernisation theories which Servaes (1983:13) criticises as if as societies develop, they lose their individual identities and gravitate toward a common culture. The essential input that indigenous communities have to offer to the development process is thus ignored. Consequently, this results in overlooking the cultural nuances of communities and eventually, in the failure of the development effort (Chitnis 2005).

4.2.1.5 A New Paradigm – Participatory Development Communication

4.2.1.5.1 Participatory Paradigm

Logic dictates that the name of this paradigm implies that some action is taking place in one way or the other, amongst two or more people. It, therefore, confronts the preceding dominant and imperialistic paradigms, whose approach is of a linear, top-down nature. Coupled with development and development communication, according to Sparks (2007:56) this paradigm came into being around the same time as the imperialistic paradigm. However, what made it gain more popularity during and after the slow death of the imperialistic approach was its flexibility and accommodativeness that created room for everyone and in so doing made individual people and groups to feel a sense of belonging.

Literature shows that it was during the 1970s and 1980s that this notion intensified spreading amongst various researchers, philosophers and others affected. (Toivanen, 2014:32) Meanwhile, what was deemed internationally accepted gradually shifted from a linear, top-down modernisation approach to that of a participatory nature, where the trend of development programmes that were “decided centrally and imposed on a

population with or without their consent” was out-dated (Sparks, 2007:56; Toivanen, 2014:32) Having been in the dark about how to approach development, scholars were obliged to go and communicatively engage the people in the process in order to look for an answer to turn around the top-down models to bottom-up models through such active engagement with the people.

4.2.1.5.2 Participatory Development

Therefore, in response to criticisms of the one-way flow of communication in development, participatory development campaigns developed to include local communities in processes of Social Cohesion. (Dutta, 2011:38). Dutta (2011:38) argues saying that the genre of participatory development campaigns use participation as a strategic tool for the purposes of achieving the development agendas of the funding agencies and campaign planners. Initially, participatory mechanisms are involved in the inclusion of the community in formative research to gather data about audience characteristics. In so doing, it would help improve the effectiveness of the campaign as it considers the inputs of the community of the higher education institution.

Subsequently participatory channels are utilised as mechanisms of diffusing the messages of development carried out by the campaign planners through group meetings, forums, performances. Often participatory communication channels are combined with entertainment education. For example, the television comedy show ‘Mind Your Language’ is a combination of education, humour, language, and culture, during which a group of people from different cultures are in one lecture learning about each other’s cultures in a humorous way. Another example is Mbongeni Ngema’s stage play called *Woza Albert* (1983), in which people of diverse cultures plead for freedom/social cohesion through an artistic way.

The ushering-in of the participatory paradigm brought about relief as it shed more light on participation for the emancipation of society. It recognized that all societies had their own developmental aspirations being aligned with those of the West or not, but in any case, those needs should and would be defined by the people themselves. Unlike the dominant and imperialist paradigms as stated above, it was no longer the outsider and distant expert or the local elites who would dictate the course for

development. Only by allowing the people to identify the needs for change would they be engaged with the projects and engender sustainable Social Cohesion. (Tomlinson, 1991:157) When one brings the concepts of 'communication', 'strategy' and 'social cohesion' together, a sense of the need for development is created. As such and as earlier mentioned, Participatory Communication regarding the context of this study should be viewed as developmental. For purposes of the aim and objectives of this study, it should be borne in mind that Participatory Communication is used interchangeably with the term 'Participatory Development Communication'.

“Participatory Communication is the right of all people to individually and collectively speak their word: This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of everyone. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone –nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words...” (Paulo Freire, 1983:76)

“Participatory Communication incorporates the concepts in the framework of multiplicity. It stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratisation and participation at all levels –international, national, local and individual. It points to a strategy, not merely inclusive of, but largely emanating from, the traditional ‘receivers’.” (Servaes, 1983:13)

Participation is very important in any decision-making process for development to share information, knowledge, trust, commitment, and a right attitude in development projects. Succinctly put in line with Freire (1983:76) and Servaes, (1983:13) above, Du Plooy (2017:335) views Development Communication as “communication aimed at improving participants’ physical, economic and/or social well-being”. In my view the changing landscape of politics with its tendency towards democracy in most countries is creating a thirst for people to reach out to one another. Communication to me is central in this regard and therefore the lifeblood to facilitate such. Therefore, in line with what McBride, Chairperson of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems argues... “this calls for a new attitude for overcoming stereotyped thinking and to promote more understanding of diversity and plurality, with full respect for the dignity and equality of people living in different conditions and acting

in different ways” (McBride, 2006: 254). That being the case, I believe that such democratic tendencies are aligned to people’s growing awareness of their rights. Thus, the point of departure must always be the community because it is at the community level that the problems of living conditions are discussed, and interactions with other communities are elicited. Waisbord (2000:4) advises that the need for reciprocal collaboration throughout all levels of participation is highly emphasised as core in this regard.

Participation in Waisbord (2000:4) is made possible during decision-making about the subjects treated in the messages and procedures of selection. A fundamental hindrance to the decision to adopt the participation strategy is that it threatens existing hierarchies. Furthermore, Servaes and Malikhaio (2005:97), cautions that dealing with participation does not imply that development specialists, planners and institutional leaders should be totally ignored, but that the view of the local community and their suggestions for changes in the policy are first taken into consideration before allocation and distribution of resources for development projects.

4.2.1.5.3 Approaches to Participatory Communication

Literature shows that two major approaches to participatory communication are found, which are globally accepted as best practice and are making huge common. Firstly, the ideas of access, participation and self-management articulated in the UNESCO debates of the 1970s (Berrigan, 1979:6) and Paulo Freire’s (1983, 1994) *Dialogical Pedagogy* and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* respectively. The view about this is that every communication project that calls itself participatory accepts the principles of democratic communication.

Derived from Marx’s (1975, in Bolton, 2005:5) early works, the first approach is seen as a moment of utopian hope that a human being has a destiny that transcends life as a fulfilment of material needs in which his insistence is on collective solutions. Upon that, Freire (1994:36) agrees and emphasises that individual solution is no solution to general situations of poverty and cultural subjugation. The Freirian argument works by a dual theoretical strategy. Dutta (2011:45) emphasises the words of Freire (1994:36)

above and insists that subjugated people be it the poor, uneducated, disabled, or whichever marginalised, must be treated as fully human subjects in any political process. This, implies dialogical communication, which embraces respect for each human being and more important, a theology that demands that respect.

As a result of capitalism that has infiltrated and infected communities of most countries around the world, it is very unlikely to find such a view popular amongst elites, which Waisbord (2000:5) also noticed even in third world countries. Despite that, he also noticed a widespread acceptance of Freire's (1994:36) notion of dialogic communication as normative in participatory communication. Focus is mainly on dialogical communication that is based on group dialogue, rather than amplifying media like radio, print and television. Freire also gives little attention to the language or form of communication, devoting most of his discussion to the intentions of communication actions.

4.3. PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

4.3.1. Background/ Key Principles and Characteristics of Participatory Action Research

PAR is a democratic and all-inclusive approach, that cuts across a broad variety of fields and disciplines. Its definition also varies from one discipline to another. In spite of common principles and characteristics of PAR resound. McTaggart (1994:37) outlined 6 tenets of PAR, which are: an active approach to improving social practice through change; congruence on authentic participation; collaboration; establishing self-critical communities; and involving people in theorizing about their practices. In addition, PAR requires that people put the practices, ideas, and assumptions about institutions to the test, involves record-keeping, requires participants to objectify their own experiences, involves making critical analysis, and is a political process. McTaggart (1994:37) articulated that PAR starts with small cycles and groups and allows participants to build records while allowing and requiring participants to give a reasoned justification of their social (educational) work to others. Stringer (1996), views PAR as **democratic**, thus enabling the participation of all people; secondly, **equitable**, as it acknowledges equity of people's worth; thirdly, **liberating**, in that it provides freedom from oppressive, debilitating conditions; and

fourthly, **life-enhancing**, which enables the expression of people's full human potential.

In an attempt to include the different views of PAR above, literature of Kemmis and McTaggart (2014:21) Babbie and Mouton (2017:314), as well as Du Plooy (2017:345) agree that amongst others, key principles of PAR are that:

- Firstly, the catalyst/researcher is not just a facilitator, but also a change agent and participant in the process.
- The research participants in PAR, according to Babbie and Mouton (2017:314) are also referred to as human subjects after giving consent to voluntarily participate, given their crucial role as co-owners of the knowledge production process.
- PAR seeks to democratise the research relationship, meaning it aims to reduce the social and communicative distance between the researcher and research participants and to ensure that a symmetrical and equal relationship is established.
- Local knowledge is not only valued, but indeed honoured and celebrated, in all forms of PAR.
- PAR is not an end, but a means through which action can be planned and implemented and such action should always be aimed at serving the interests of the participants.
- Related to the previous principle, is the crucial importance given to the goal of empowerment in PAR, which entails that the poor, and exploited in societies acquire power – also through research; It involves Conscientization (raising awareness), emancipation, learning, strengthening research participants in their capacity to do research, and generates autonomy.
- Because of the applied and problem-solving nature of PAR, it is intentionally multidisciplinary and eclectic in its use of methods.
- PAR has a preference of using qualitative methods, because such methods are based on a similar view of the social world; In addition, it also employs certain unconventional methods such as collective research techniques (dialogue), using participants' own records and witness accounts (in recovering history),
- The quality of PAR data is established through a process which is termed "social verification/validation".

- Feedback and diffusion of research results happens to research participants and their communities from an integral part of PAR.

4.3.2. Historical Origins of PAR

Social researchers Babbie and Mouton (2017:314) state that Participatory Action Research (PAR) has its roots in the special concerns and problems associated with doing research in Third World countries. Freire, (1974: 48) and Burnes and Cooke, (2013: 411) also found that the roots of Participatory Action Research are found in dialogue and conscientisation as the key to social cohesion of whatsoever nature, during which marginalised communities become practically involved themselves by critically analysing their situation and cooperate to address solutions which suit them according to the way they themselves understand and experience their own needs. Methodologies of Participatory Action Research were, (Brydon-Miller, 2001:81) developed to inculcate an equitable, liberating and life-enhancing democratic lifestyle. MacDonald, (2012: 37) further explains this as breaking away from linear colonial mentalities of traditional research, and forms coalitions with individuals with the least political, economic, socio-cultural, and other related powers.

4.3.3. Objectives of PAR

To achieve the overall aim of Participatory Action Research, Babie and Mouton (2017:322) and Du Plooy (2017:330) agree on the following objectives pursued:

- Firstly, it wishes to address issues of methodology, ethics and power relations that arise when doing research in more marginalised settings.
- Its objective of Empowerment includes conscientization, emancipation, learning, strengthening participants' research capacities.
- To decrease communicative distance among members of a community, by involving all in programmes which affect them directly and/or indirectly, which is in line with Habermas' (1984:100) theory of Communicative Action.
- To building a basis for a common field of knowledge so that all community members of all racial groups, rich, poor, educated, uneducated, abled, and disabled/differently abled can understand how the problem affects them to participate accordingly.

- Producing more socially meaningful research results through inclusivity as stated above.
- Inducing long-term motivation, because some issues must be given sufficient time to unfold for monitoring and to be able to see indicators of success; and
- Democratising science for purposes of inclusion and recognition of indigenous knowledge where it deems applicable/necessary.

4.3.4 Components of Participatory Action Research

Selenger (1997) identified seven components to the PAR process.

The **first** component acknowledges that the problem originates in the community itself and is defined, analyzed, and solved by the community. The fact that a higher education institution is a community with a wide spectrum of diversities divisions are bound to exist. Figueroa, et al (2002:5) advise that the best way to bridge such divides is to follow the Participatory Action Research route.

Secondly, the goal of PAR research is the radical transformation of social reality and improvement in the lives of the individuals involved; thus, community members are the primary beneficiaries of the research. This is especially true in countries that are busy converting from a linear colonial mindset into a new dispensation of adopting a democratic approach such as in the case of South Africa in 1994. (Act 108/1996:1)

Thirdly, PAR involves the full and active participation of the community at all levels of the entire research process. However, not only levels, but the various races, sectors, cultures, beliefs, genders, etc should be taken into consideration to emphasise the democratic principle of inclusivity and pillar of Social Cohesion.

The **fourth** component of PAR encompasses a range of powerless groups of individuals: the exploited, the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized. My view is that discrimination of such should be discouraged at the highest level it deserves. Powerless groups can provide solutions to many problems the community is battling with, especially those that directly affect them. This is reminiscent of the Disabled People of South Africa's motto, which clearly states: "Nothing for us, without us!"

Selenger (1997) cited the **fifth** component of PAR as the ability to create a greater awareness in individuals' own resources that can mobilise them for self-reliant development. If communities could realize the potential they have, a lot of financial resources could be saved for further development, because they would be doing their own things for themselves as they deem it fit.

Sixth: PAR is more than a scientific method, in that community participation in the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality. It is for this reason that the people themselves should find their own solutions because they understand their needs better than anyone else.

Lastly, PAR allows the researcher to be a committed participant, facilitator, and learner in the research process, which fosters militancy, rather than detachment. Through that it discourages the linear colonial mentality and approach of doing things, forcing down views and solutions down people's throats. By being a participant researcher, you also learn in the process of research.

4.3.5. Formats of Participatory Action Research

Because of its liberated, democratic, and inclusive approach, Participatory Action Research can be used in various fields and disciplines and according to Varcoe, (2006) and Young, (2006) it is suited for research in education, health, community development, organizational development, agriculture, industry, university-community development, and various others, especially those involving and affecting groups of the oppressed or marginalized individuals. Within the context of this study, Selener, (1997:237) succinctly captures it when he says: "If PAR is to serve Social Cohesion, democratic forms of interaction and decision-making leading to empowering and democratic ends to benefit the powerless" are imperative. Since community members are considered co-investigators throughout the entire process Gillis and Jackson, (2002:186) insist that collaboration in PAR is emphasised throughout the process, which helps them to become empowered and as such, find their own solutions.

Combining PAR with other qualitative approaches has the potential to address health inequities, promote community participation, and foster individual empowerment (Bailey et al., 2006). Action in which mobilisation tends “to change, generate, or evaluate practices and policies” (Young, 2006:500) is the anticipated outcome of PAR.

This section discusses the formats of PAR which include the Feminist Approach, Mutual Inquiry as well as the Community-based Participatory Research Approach. According to Baldwin (2012:467) Participatory approaches to research intentionally include the people and groups who are most affected by an inquiry in the design and execution of the process. Participatory forms of research help to ensure that the methods and findings reflect the perspectives, cultures, priorities, or concerns of those who are being studied. Because students, parents, community members, or other stakeholders are given active roles in a participatory research or evaluation process and therefore roles in producing new knowledge or insights about their school, organization, or community participatory research is a foundational and widely used strategy in organizing, engagement, and equity work.

Baldwin (2012:468) further states that while participatory approaches to research and evaluation can take a wide variety of forms, and many different methodologies may be used to achieve different objectives, participatory approaches to research and evaluation can be organized into three broad categories:

4.3.5.1. Feminist Participatory Action Approach

Firstly, the Feminist Participatory Action Approach (FPAR) is a format or approach that is consistent with APWLD values and aims. (apwld.org). It uses methods that support APWLD’s aims to support and grow women’s rights movements and to advance women’s human’s rights. Groups that usually advocate for women’s rights are such as South Africa’s ANCWL (African National Congress Women’s League),

POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) and various others. This happens mainly at their different levels of conferences where they have dialogue/debate around issues affecting women such as abuse and development. However, due to the nature of the research at hand, using this approach would do injustice to the aim and objectives of what the study wants to achieve, because the feminist approach only focuses on the female gender, excluding males, the LGBTQI and disabled communities.

4.3.5.2. Mutual Inquiry

Because Participatory Action Research (PAR) is designed to promote active involvement in every stage of the research process by those who are conventionally the focus of research, it therefore replaces the traditional hierarchical approach to research with a commitment to mutual inquiry and local ownership. (Chataway, 2013:747). The Mutual inquiry approach usually manifests itself in deeply divided societies such that of South Africa with a history of severe oppression under apartheid rule of government. Using PAR allows a tenuous alliance to develop between the researcher and co-researchers who are members of the community themselves to achieve our goals, the PAR principles of mutuality and public responsibility were contextualized considerably based upon the prescriptions found in literature relating to PAR. Furthermore Baker, et al (2014:1) notes that, given the diverse backgrounds co-researchers bring to the table, working as team contributes to understanding of epistemological and ontological complexity that is found within the context of the study.

4.3.5.3 Community-Based Participatory Action Research

During Community-Based Participatory Research, research is typically conducted by academics and other professional researchers who involve or collaborate with the individuals and groups that would have traditionally been considered the “subjects” of a study. Minkler and Wallerstein (2008:1) view Community-based participatory research as one of the formats of PAR as a collaborative approach to

the research process that affords the so-called 'researched community' an opportunity to decide what needs should be researched. Baldwin (2012:468) states that the primary intention of many formal forms of participatory research such as projects supported by academic institutions or philanthropic foundations are, in the first instance, to contribute to expanding knowledge in a scholarly or professional field, rather than directly change the communities, organizations, or groups being studied. A second type of the community-based approach is where change is directly happening in communities. Collaboration in this regard helps to provide an approach to operationalize the objectives of the research and topic under scrutiny. This approach "epitomise a kind of action research that is more than a method; instead, it is an orientation to research that involves mutual respect, co-learning, capacity building, and a balance between research and action. (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995:1667).

I view this format of Participatory Action Research as the most appropriate approach for this study, because here the intention is to change a particular community, namely that of the higher education institution and use to shape the design of a new initiative, namely social cohesion. Though they may collaborate with professional researchers and evaluators on both the design and execution of the process, Participatory action research initiatives are preferably designed and led by local practitioners and community members. (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995:1668) (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2008:2) (Baldwin, 2012:469).

4.3.5.4. Epistemology of Participatory Action Research

Literature shows that any discussion of PAR's characteristics and the researchers involved in it inevitably engages with questions of worldview and epistemology. Reason and Bradbury (2006:7) argue that to undertake PAR researchers must adopt a participatory perspective or worldview, which asks us to be both situated and reflexive, to be explicit about the perspective from which knowledge is created, to see inquiry as a process of coming to know, serving the democratic, practical ethos of action research.

For us, the key is an ontology that suggests that human beings are dynamic agents capable of reflexivity and self-change, and an epistemology that accommodates the reflexive capacity of human beings within the research process. In Reason and Bradbury's terms, this perspective represents an 'extended epistemology', which draws on diverse forms of knowing to inform action. Such an epistemology represents a challenge of scientific positivism and seeks to practise the radical, suggesting that it is not enough to understand the world, but that one must change it for the better. PAR therefore emphasises that there is a socially constructed reality within which multiple interpretations of a single phenomenon are possible by both the researchers and participants/co-researchers. (Greenwood and Levin, 1998). Such a perspective opens spaces for different forms of knowledge generation through methodological innovation and political action.

Reason (2004) and Kesby, et al, (2005) noticed that the diverse base in radical theory, the conceptual contributions and constant self-critique of PAR inherent in its iterative cycles of reflection and action illustrate that PAR is not just another method. Rather PAR is an 'orientation to inquiry', which demands methodological innovation or problems and the relationships between researcher and co-researchers/participants. PAR also values the processes of research as much as the products, so that its success rests not only on the quality of information generated, but also on the extent to which skills, knowledge and participants' capacities are developed through the research experience. (Cornwall and Jewkes; Kesby, et al, 2005; Maguire, 1987)

Contextualizing PAR as a qualitative method into communication research such as this study, Du Plooy (2017:37) states that:

- Variations are seen as the roots of growth and development and are not distrusted; diversity and dialogue contribute to a more complete understanding of an organisation as a social environment.
- Renewal is sought on a continuous basis, allowing for the free flow of information, and resilience in the reformulation, testing and retesting of new models, programmes, and research methods.

- Operations are conducted in a consultative manner and with recognition of the demands of the environment. Procedures are flexible and provide for participation.
- The effectiveness of communication is derived from interdependent relations among sub-groups and individuals, and between the organisation and its external environment. Research is used as a vital tool to sensitise the higher education institution's community to potential conflict and changing needs.
- Developing and maintaining relationships is more meaningful than predictable outcomes; a common institutional goal is pursued through collective support.
- Problem-solving strategies are guided by asking research-related questions that may not previously have been considered. Problem evaluation is seen as a creative opportunity that can be explored to meet changing institutional and individual needs.
- Research is therefore conducted with the applied goal of exploring and interpreting communication in a qualitative and holistic manner.

4.3.5.5 Ontology of Participatory Action Research

As referred to above by Kindon, et al (2009:482) the ontological approach here is one that suggests that human beings are dynamic agents capable of reflexivity and self-change. From a communication point of view and for purposes of this study, Du Plooy (2017:36) explains the ontological approach as follows, that:

- Unlike in the case of the quantitative approach, the institutional culture is participatory, and access to information leads to a shared responsibility and the development of knowledge competencies.
- Dissemination of information is based upon the principle of inclusivity.
- Management and leadership's authority and credibility are questioned, unless it is transparent in matters such as budgeting, decision-making procedures, planning, and the formulation and application of policies.
- Institutional control is decentralised to sub-systems, departments, or sections in the organisation.
- Conflict is acknowledged and resolved by analysing relations, and the strategies to be followed are collaboratively agreed to by the parties involved.

- The maintenance of order is a joint responsibility of the whole institution's community (i.e., management/leadership, academia, operational staff, students, etc)
- Management/leadership leads by example and provides an environment in which the university community has access to information and in which they are free to question, discuss and participate in decisions that affects them.
- Sub-systems are interdependent, and changes are accommodated by the self-reliant abilities of individuals of sub-systems in the institution. This includes the empowerment of minority sub-groups through knowledge and taking on the shared responsibility of the outcomes of decisions taken.

4.3.5.6 Rhetoric in Participatory Action Research

Rhetoric is defined as “the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques”. (www.merriam-webster.com). Literature shows that the use of language in the history of communication for Social Cohesion was inappropriate as it had mainly positivist colonial aims and objectives to achieve through it. This is also evident as viewed earlier in different moments of the Bricolage theoretical framework and lens. (Chapter 2). However, in PAR, McTaggart (1994:35) warns against that and advises that appropriate language should be used to guide the study. In PAR and within the context of this study, it is in my view mainly the responsibility of the catalyst researcher to use appropriate language.

Babbie and Mouton (2017:61) says for example that unlike calling people objects of research, they should rather be referred to as participants or co-researchers or co-owners, because they also own the research process mainly because it is about them and in this regard about building/strengthening relationships with the aim of fostering social cohesion in their higher education institution. Given the fact that this is a communication study, Du Plooy (2017:168) prefers the use of communication terminology throughout the process to emphasise the huge and core role of communication in fostering social cohesion in any community whichever. The democratic nature of participatory action research puts ownership at the core of the process and therefore obliges researchers to treat all participants equally in terms of

every aspect of the process that affects them. Kendall et al, 2011:2) advise that to manoeuvre the PAR process effectively and efficiently, co-researchers must realise the appropriateness of the process, thereby owning it. Therefore they have the right to know information about every little aspect of the entire process and as to how it affects them and how they are benefitting from it.

4.4. CONDUCTING PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

4.4.1 Overarching View

4.4.1.1 The Process/Steps of Participatory Action Research

During this study, PAR focuses mainly upon the formulation of a team of stakeholders (Kemmis, 2012:885), which in this regard consists of students from political science, economic science, social science, information and communication technology, environmental science and students in the legal field. According to Mahlomaholo (2015:13), stakeholders participate in one or more of problem definition, problem assessment, intervention planning, implementation, and evaluation. Because communication is at the centre here, this exercise furthermore necessitates that through information and brainstorming sessions, a common vision is formulated; a SWOT analysis is done; priorities are identified; the desired strategic plan is designed; activities are planned per priority; responsible persons are allocated per activity and resources; time frames are set; and lastly, monitoring and evaluation takes place. Mahlomaholo (2015:13). However, notwithstanding the latter, the process could change or be modified here and there, depending on the context and aim and objectives the community wants to achieve, because communities' needs differ, which are largely influenced by aspects such as culture, religion, political systems.

Du Plooy (2017:339) views the Process of Participatory Action Research as one that starts with someone, preferably a member of the community who stimulates an interest in the need for certain change in a social system or an awareness of a problem. For example, a teacher may become aware of children's drug (ab)use. During this initial stage, however, the awareness of the problem or the need for change will not necessarily be known or shared by members of the community. Figueroa, et al (2002:5) describes it as a dynamic, iterative process that starts with a catalyst that can

be internal or external. This catalyst/researcher leads to dialogue within the community that when effective, leads to collective action and the resolution of a common problem.

Emerging from the umbrella process above, according to Du Plooy (2017:168) two processes that involve communication scholars can occur simultaneously, or chronologically, following the initial stage: Initiation and Legitimation.

4.4.1.1.1 Initiation

Initiation in the context of collective decision-making, refers to dissemination of information about the problem, or need for change, either by an individual or a group that has a personal knowledge of the institutional or social system. Initiation usually takes the form of discussions with representatives from a particular community, followed by workshops that involve other members of the institution. During these workshops, subjects not only become participants, but they also become research participants. As stated above Du Plooy (2017:339) for example, the teacher who became aware of the children's drug (ab)use can approach you as a communication scientist and as a fellow teacher, so you could act as a facilitator by involving other teachers, parents, community members, and the children themselves.

4.4.1.1.2 Legitimation

Legitimation can involve any number of individuals or groups, depending on the size of the community and the nature of collectively decided change(s) to be introduced. Because legitimizers have status and power, (e.g., the local chief, the town mayor, or the president of an organisation), their involvement during the initial steps of participatory action research will increase the chances of securing decision and proposal approval.

Once a collective decision has been approved, this intent is translated into action or the execution of an action plan. For example, while investigating the children's drug-taking behaviour, the group collectively realises that a lack of parental involvement in children's schooling and an absence of recreational facilities and entrepreneurial opportunities are some of the causes of such behaviour. Legitimation, in this regard points to the involvement of parents and other role-players, such as local business,

that can be functional in finding solutions (financial support or raw material) for the lack of recreational and entrepreneurial facilities and opportunities.

In this regard, because the community under scrutiny here, is university's student population, the only thing that was needed was approval from the university to work with students. Also, because the students are according to law, adult-enough to participate, it was therefore not necessary for parental permission to participate in this study. No financial assistance was also necessary from students. The study was explained to them, and their confidence was won to voluntarily participate in this.

Ethical consideration/approval was granted through the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs. Please refer to the Letter of Ethics Approval from the University's Committee responsible, attached to this study.

When viewing the process of PAR, Babbie and Mouton (2017:645) notes that PAR takes as point of departure the central role that is afforded to participation during all aspects of the research process; and that there are degrees of participation which range from "participation control" to "forms of consultation" and "participation". Du Plooy (2017:169) briefly explains that such process includes Problem formulation; Planning the initial Design of the Project; Implementing and monitoring the Project; Reaching final Conclusions, Creating New Meaning, and Generating New Knowledge; Communication of Results; Review and Reflection; Assessment of Results; Validation of Findings.

4.5. Steps in Participatory Action Research

4.5.1 Formulation of a Team

4.5.1.1 The Catalyst/Researcher and its Role in PAR

According to Babbie and Mouton (2017:646), the researcher in PAR is defined first and foremost as a change agent whose primary responsibility is to initiate and facilitate "emancipatory" change during the research process. According to Figueroa (2002:6) and various others, he/she is viewed as a catalyst that can be internal or external who leads to dialogue within the community that when effective leads to collective action

and the resolution of a common problem. Figueroa (2002:6) goes further saying that this catalyst represents the trigger that initiates the community dialogue about a specific issue of concern or interest to the community. Expected contributions by the researcher according to Du Plooy (2017:342) include active participation as a change agent; communication and research knowledge/skills to guide the process; and skills development in interpersonal and small group communication in terms of negotiation and mediation.

Du Plooy (2017:342) further outlines the expected gains relating to the researcher, which include creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, to reach meaningful consensus; to promote communication among the different stakeholders involved; to understand the problems experienced by the particular community and how it relates to those of other communities in a wider social context; to empower individuals and sub-groups involved; to contribute to an on-going development of participatory action processes, procedures and methods; to disseminate the understanding and information gained to others; and lastly to enable society to benefit from such research.

4.5.1.2 Relationship with Co-Researchers in PAR

The research subjects in PAR are referred to as research participants given their crucial role as co-owners of the knowledge production process in relation to the Researcher (Babbie and Mouton, 2017:646)

As facilitator of the process, Pool and DeSanctis, (1992:26) and Walther and Burgoon, (1992:57) believe that the role of the researcher in this regard is mainly to instil in participants' interactions communicative practices that would help to reach meaningful group consensus. They advise the following to be done in the researcher-participants relations and interactions, namely:

- to guide participants to approach and argue decisions on the basis of logic and not personal or individualistic judgements;
- support solutions with which they agree even in cases of partial agreement; that differences of opinion should be expected and treated as natural, positive and helpful inputs in the decision-making process;

- everyone should be involved and given the opportunity to participate in decision-making;
- conflict-reducing techniques such as basing decisions on a majority vote, averaging or trading, should be avoided; and
- lastly, that a change of mind for preventing conflict or simply for the sake of reaching agreement should be avoided at all cost.

The role of the researcher as outlined by Pool and DeSanctis, (1992:26) and Walther and Burgoon, (1992:57) above, is very broad for the sake of fairness, and to be as inclusive as possible. Because of the way the facilitator plays his role since the beginning until the end of the process, I view it as unfair to just call him a catalyst. Therefore, in doing justice to the principles of participatory action research and to this study, I deem it befitting to call him a catalyst-researcher, because he does not only “catalyse”, but also “co-research” simultaneously with the rest of the team from the beginning until the end.

As the project is my brainchild, it was mainly also incumbent upon me to see to the facilitation of its smooth running to achieve the set aim and objectives to be achieved. It was therefore my responsibility to build strong relations between myself as catalyst-researcher and the students as co-researchers as well as between the students themselves especially when I introduced them to each other including myself. This to me was already the beginning of social cohesion, because students from different fields and walks of life started to make contact by exchanging information amongst each other.

Because of the nature of the study and that it concerns the institution of higher education common sense dictates that participants must be from within the institution. Hence, students from inside the University of the Free State were participants/co-researchers, because it is their institution and the issues dealt with relating to this study affects them directly. According to Figueroa et al (2002:7) all groups of the affected community should be represented with the consent of such groups to participate, meaning all demographics should be taken into consideration when putting up a team of representatives/stakeholders.

Figueroa et al (2002:7) further states that it should be noted that a mechanism that provides opportunities for active participation for leadership is more likely to convey Social Cohesion as it provides reinforcement and renewal of the existing leadership. How groups and their interests in the issue were elected is important.

Participatory Action Research gurus like Kemmis and McTaggart (2014:135), Du Plooy (2017:342) and Babbie and Mouton (2017:62) are all in agreement that the reason for that is because the issues at hand do affect them and other members of the institution in one way or the other. Those were carefully chosen bearing in mind their experience at the institution and fields of specialization.

1. Students

This category is the core of co-researchers participating in the research to bring about social cohesion in a higher education institution, because students constitute the biggest chunk of the university and as such, owes its existence thereto. Otherwise put without the students, there is no university.

Figueroa et al (2002:8) states that participation of those who are most affected by the problem is a characteristic of Social Cohesion intervention, whom in this regard are the students. As stakeholders, their involvement may be direct by way of working on the solution or indirect by advocating or supporting for facilitation for the solution. In this regard students are involved in both the former and the latter.

Because of the vastness of the study, students who participated were from Political Sciences, Economic Sciences, Social Sciences, Technology, Environmental Sciences and Legal/Law Studies. The reason for/role of these students was to intensively participate and meaningfully contribute towards the study from a perspective of their fields of specialisation as mentioned above. More specifically final year students were participants based on their lifespan and experiences since their first year. They better

knew and understood the university and its community in terms of policies/rules, economy, societal issues/ cultures, environment/ structures, operations, trends/tendencies, and general campus life.

4.5.1.3. Recognition of a Problem

Various scholars such as Kemmis and McTaggart (2014:98) and others, have realised that the process of problem identification is a very complex one, may take a great deal of time and may be catalyzed internally or externally. They further found that depending on the context and nature of study conducted, the “recognition of a problem” within the dialogue process may occur simultaneously with “clarification of perceptions” and “expression of individual and shared interests”. Assigned in line with the importance of wider participation by the affected groups, these stages may, in fact, be all integral parts to the problem identification and clarification process. Figueroa, et al (2002:8) advise that they should be considered together with “Social Cohesion” indicators of “information equity” and “sense of ownership,” in assessing a community’s progress towards addressing the problem.

As the first stage in the process of Social Cohesion, the recognition by the community that there is a problem that limits, constrains, hurt their quality of life, or has the potential to do so, is crucial. Therefore, early-stage awareness of the problem is whether the issue is recognized by the community as a problem; and whether the catalyst and the people are involved in the recognition of the problem. (Figueroa, et al 2002:8)

Because I am part of the university community as a student myself, my engagement with them daily made me realise that the university had a physical environment with objects that are strange to majority of students which makes the environment unfriendly; that there was strange interaction of students; that some clothing and appearance of some students were somehow questionable. Because that phenomenon affects the entire student community curiosity made me to talk to various students and ask whether they were also sharing the same sentiments, to which they all agreed that a problem does exist. That warranted further investigation.

According to Figueroa (2002:8), two aspects are implicit here of which the first is, the identification of a solution, which should be clear because of the “clarification of perceptions” by the wider community. I asked them to individually think about some solution in the meantime. Second is the recognition of the opposition to change. The opposition may be based on tradition, economics, control and power, ethnicity, competition or just fear of change, which may be resolved during the “expression of shared interests” and “involvement of leaders and stakeholders.” I made them aware that change goes with compromise, sacrifice and as such, in most cases with pain also. Therefore, an evaluator faced with opposition to the solutions should first assess what resources have been mobilised to overcome the barriers.

4.5.1.4. Mobilisation of Resources

Linked to the assessment of the status above, Figueroa (2002:9) states that it is likely that the higher the resources mobilised by the community, the higher the commitment and solution for the problem. The extent of the participation should also influence the sense of ownership of the program and as such contributes towards social cohesion: This includes the magnitude and type of resources and organisations. Fortunately, the nature and scope of the study did not need resources that were hard to get. Firstly, I mobilised human resources, which refers to the students themselves; secondly, technological resources, such as cellular phones to keep contact and exchange and recording information during engagements; thirdly, airtime and data, which students volunteered to provide for themselves; fourthly, stationery necessary, especially for field notes during participatory observation.

4.5.1.5 Brainstorming/Assessment of Current Status

At this stage, the community may be already motivated to assess the scope of the problem to define a plan of action. This may require gathering information about the problem from an available source(s), within the community, upon which the community should decide how. Information gathering through group meetings may prove good as it facilitates sharing of knowledge and progress on the issue. As recommended by Figueroa (2002:9) existing mechanisms are used for information gathering about the scope of the problem and how it changes over time, I used resources inside the university community. In this regard those included students as human resources and cellular phones as technological resources as outlined above during Mobilisation.

Brainstorming took place when students in their different groups exchanged information amongst each other, which was put together at the end for further coordination by me as the main researcher.

Marshall and Rossman, (2006) state that the researcher in a Focus Group session, creates a supportive environment in which discussion and differing points of view are encouraged. The ideal thing in Participatory Action Research is to recognize and value all participants', as all participants have an opportunity to communicate (McTaggart, 1994:313). As catalyst-researcher, I introduced myself to the students and cracked a joke with students with the intention to make them feel free and relaxed and to draw their attention away from where they were previously.

I gave them a background of the purpose of the gathering, namely that I am busy doing research for my Doctoral studies and as such gathering data. I therefore mentioned the title to them, namely "A Communication Strategy to Foster Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution". To brainstorm around the title, I thereafter asked them to each think from the perspective of their respective fields of study and within the context of the University of the Free State, what they regard as:

- i) A challenge(s) to foster social cohesion in the University of the Free State.
- ii) A solution (s) to the challenge(s)
- iii) A condition (s) to achieve the solution(s) for social cohesion.
- iv) A threat(s) to foster social cohesion in the University of the Free State; as well as
- v) An indicator of success of achieving social cohesion in the University of the Free State.

4.6 STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

4.6.1 Focus Group Common Vision of the Future

Literature shows that once a community has passed through the previous stages of brainstorming, assessment of prevailing status, it would be ready to plan where it wants to be in the future and how to get there (Figueroa, 2002:10), otherwise "Where

there is no vision, the people perish.” (NIV Bible, Proverbs 29:18) When broad community participation is allowed it will ensure that the “vision” is inclusive of all community members’ hopes and aspirations, in terms of representation of community members and affected groups in defining the vision, as to how have the community articulated its “dream”. No matter the amount and variety of cultures, races, religions, political parties, unions, and other formations exist in the institution, their agreement and common aim/vision to achieve for the future of the institution is to bring about social cohesion amongst its community members.

4.6.2 Setting Objectives

Strategically spoken, no vision can be achieved unless objectives are set. (Janse Van Rensburg, 2013:2) My view is that these objectives are serving as beacons that guide me as catalysts together with the co-researchers the direction towards achieving the intended vision. Like steps of a ladder, objectives help you climb to your aim at the top. This answers the question on the ‘who’, the ‘what’, the ‘how’, the ‘when’ and the ‘where’ and as such constitutes the plan/programme. A shared vision should allow the community to list the goals/objectives it wants to achieve. The community, together with the leaders and/or change agent, should evaluate how realistic the goals are and should try to set moderate goals to avoid a sense of failure. Figueroa, et al (2002:10) advise that goals that are challenging but feasible should be preferred and for the purpose of this study these include looking at challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success. This participatory goal setting, in principle, would secure wide support and action, especially those goals set up by the community to deal with the problem, followed by a level of agreement of all. (Figueroa, et al, 2002:10)

After consultation with and by the leaders of the different groups, I asked, through telephonic interview, their leaders to each mention the different points they have noted during their observations as advocated by McTaggart (1994:313). Through their leaders all participants’ various points were put together, and compared based upon the objectives of the study as mentioned above, namely:

- Which challenge(s) exist to foster social cohesion in the University of the Free State.

- What solution(s) could address the challenge(s).
- What would constitute a favourable condition(s) to achieve the solution(s) for social cohesion.
- Are there any threat(s) that could hamper/sabotage the fostering of social cohesion in the University of the Free State; as well as
- What would be an indicator(s) of success of achieving social cohesion in the University of the Free State?

This implies that:

- **Political Science Students** discussed the title of the study mainly from but not limited to a political point of view, in terms of challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and indicators of success.
- **Economic and Management Sciences Students** discussed the title of the study mainly from but not limited to an Economic and Management Sciences viewpoint, in terms of challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and indicators of success.
- **Social Sciences Students** discussed the title of the study mainly from but not limited to a social point of view, in terms of challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and indicators of success.
- **Technology Students** discussed the title of the study mainly from but not limited to an Information and Communications Technology point of view, in terms of challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and indicators of success.
- **Environmental and Related Sciences Students** discussed the title of the study mainly from but not limited to an Environmental and Related Sciences point of view, in terms of challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and indicators of success; and
- **Legal Studies/Law Students** discussed the title of the study mainly from but not limited to Legal Studies/Law point of view, in terms of challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and indicators of success.

The reason for the approach above is that each student has a deep/intense understanding of his/her own field of study and as such in a better position than others to provide answers/data in terms of challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success for the envisaged strategy for social cohesion in the University

of the Free State. Secondly, more light is shed upon the topic when a group expresses its view from the perspective of that specific field, they specialise in.

Thereafter, all data gathered was shared with every leader. This means that every leader had all data gathered by all leaders from the respective groups, the reason being for each of them to be able to comment on everyone's data in their possession. All the leaders of all groups were then interviewed based on the data gathered in line with the guidelines as set above. Everyone was therefore free to comment on any question of any field, regardless of whether they were responsible for gathering/coordinating data of field.

4.6.3 Clarification of Perceptions

Because the university community consists of various groups, therefore different perceptions are held about different phenomena/ aspects of life. It therefore obliged students to open for such different perceptions to be clarified so that all participants understand each other. Therefore, it should be re-emphasised that perceptions of all participants are taken into consideration as it is their right to freedom of expression as according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Avt 108/1996:2).

Furthermore, Figueroa, et al (2002:10) and Babbie and Mouton (2017:647) agree that when the stage of community dialogue has occurred, there should be a greater degree of unanimity and understanding over root causes and the nature of the problems possible solutions and associated actions by mechanisms for clarifying perceptions by the whole community; proportion of most affected groups effectively participating in discussions regarding the issue, and level of agreement regarding the root causes of the problem and or solution. Because the university community consists of various cultural, religious, sporting, etc groups, and therefore have different perceptions about various phenomena and aspects of life, it necessitated the study to open up for such different perceptions to be clarified. My view is that clarity on such helps to give direction in terms of decision-making and inclusiveness of all groups for a sense of belonging.

Therefore, their diversity made them come forward with different views/perceptions about issues relating to the research questions, aim and objectives the study aimed to address. These included the cultural, religious, and academic views/perceptions of which some overlapped to some certain extent but were clarified for everyone to understand.

4.6.4 Expression of Individual and Shared Interests

Figuroa, et al (2002:10) states that two goals are implicit in the expression of individual and shared interests during dialogue: Firstly, is to maximize participation in the issue, while balancing the needs of a consensus. Secondly, another goal of dialogue is to balance the interests of individuals with the larger interests of the community. Students were cautioned here by me as facilitator not to discriminate when raising their views about a certain phenomenon.

To me both these goals are only possible after clarifying perceptions above. A problem that affects a small number of members of the community, or a solution that helps a small proportion of the community at risk, must be considered considering the community's needs and the potential impact across the range of community members. This stage, like "clarification of perceptions," is transitional in the dialogue process, meaning that these transitional steps may have occurred earlier, or they may have occurred in the context of another step (e.g., involvement of leaders). It is important to identify and include all affected groups in the planning process and have proper mechanisms to communicate to all.

4.6.5 Conflict and Dissatisfaction

Because of diverse individuals and groups, views may differ and as such interests may therefore differ too. Social Cohesion researchers such as Babbie and Mouton (2017:645) and Du Plooy (2017:343) believe that balancing the interests of individuals or groups with the larger interests of the community may result in conflict. Besides existing power structures within the community that may bias the direction of the program or that may represent opposition, there may be undeniable conflicts of interest among community groups in dealing with solutions to the problem. Critical as it is described by Figuroa, et al (2002:10) this stage may terminate a program or, if

effectively dealt with, can render an empowered community. For effectively dealing with conflict more other leaders or stakeholders may be consulted to provide additional support/evidence and/or persuade influence reticent groups. It is very crucial to deal positively with conflict to advance the program, if any exists; as well as considering all resources to deal with conflict. Where they had different/conflicting perceptions or approaches to some phenomena, I had to intervene to shed light upon the issue to reach some amicable solution or understanding to avoid dissatisfaction.

4.6.7 Consensus

Getting a consensus on action can also lead to conflict or a lack of commitment. At this stage the community continues to seek resources and deals with conflict positively to advance the solution to their problem: Figueroa, et al (2002:10) states that note should be taken as to whether any conflict has arisen in reaching consensus, how it is dealt with and resolved and what consensus is reached on the action plan. In this regard consensus is reached that no one should put their culture, religion, belief above those of the other participants, because all participants are treated equally with the aim of achieve a united goal in their diversity. Consensus was reached in terms of outstanding issues that were adopted to be dealt with to achieve the aim and objectives of the study.

4.7 Priority Activities for Strategic Plan

4.7.1 Options for Action

4.7.1.1 Identification of Resources and Persons Responsible

The goal-setting stage should naturally give place to the actual planning process of what different kinds of actions can be taken to accomplish the objectives with which everyone has agreed. Figueroa (2002:11). This implies the identification of resources both inside and outside the community, as well as persons or groups that can carry them out. Important here is the mechanism used in identifying options for collective action; involvement of the affected groups in the identification of options, including both internal and external ones. Because of the vastness of the University Community and more specifically the student population, the focus group had to be divided into smaller groups according to their faculties/fields of study.

4.8 THE ACTION PLAN PROCESS

4.8.1 Prioritisation of Activities

After Brainstorming, Prioritisation of Activities was done by identifying the people responsible for particular activities. Six students were identified as leaders to each be distinctively responsible for either political, economic, social, technological, environmental, or legal information as explain underneath.

Three (3) students formed a group for dialogue regarding the topic from the perspective of their respective fields. As facilitator/participant researcher of the study, I ensured:

- Firstly, that there was balance in gender; (this was done bearing in mind also to ensure inclusivity of the LGBTQI Community)
- Secondly, that there was equal representation of different races.
- Thirdly, that there was equal representation of the disabled/differently abled community.

4.8.2 OPENING COMMUNICATIVE SPACE – ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC SPHERE

Tapping further into literature related to a study of this nature, German Philosopher, Jurgen Habermas (1984:100) advocates first and foremost for the establishment of a Public Sphere opening up Communicative Space in which activities should take place. The normal route followed to create communicative space, in most studies of this nature, is the warm body grouping or otherwise put the physical meeting approach. However, due to unforeseen circumstances such as the Covid-19 Pandemic which has befallen the world, communicative space had to be created following a digital approach to avoid physical contact to prevent or reduce the spread of Covid-19. It should be noted that, to abide by that, the process of verbal communication data gathering underneath had to be conducted by way of using social media and more specifically, WhatsApp as communication instrument/tool. This implies that a WhatsApp group had to be established to facilitate interaction/discussion. It should be

noted that, unlike in the past where telephonic data collection meant only by means of a call, technological development and advancement has changed the understanding/perception thereof and now also includes texting by using short message service (SMS) or WhatsApp or even video call.

4.8.3 METHODS EMPLOYED IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Various methods for data collection have been used in PAR. For each specific issue or situation, the researcher and participants collaborate to establish the appropriate methods of data collection (Gillis and Jackson, 2002:3; Stringer and Genat, 2004:7). Gillis and Jackson, (2002:3) and Stringer and Genat, (2004:7) recommended however, at least three selected methods to be used to transcend the limitations of each individual one, so as to triangulate data generation and produce more effective problem-solving. Stringer and Genat, (2004:7) and McNiff and Whitehead, (2006:6) agree that Focus Group Interviews and Participant Observation are effective methods of data generation employed in PAR, especially for a study of this nature.

To do justice to this study, two data collection methods had to be split in main pillars of Communication, namely those under Verbal Communication (Focus Groups), and Nonverbal Communication (Participant Observation).

4.8.3.1 VERBAL COMMUNICATION

4.8.3.1(i) Focus groups

Focus groups are considered a socially orientated process and a “form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between the research participants in order to generate data” (Kitzinger, 1995:299). According to Marshall and Rossman, (2006:1), it generally consists of seven to 12 individuals who share certain characteristics relevant to the focus of the study. My view, however, is that given the changing nature of life, societies also change and so their related developments change their needs and approaches in addressing them. Therefore, the size could be smaller or bigger, because it all depends on the nature, aim and objectives that the research wants to achieve. This number facilitates an environment for optimal communication

amongst all participants, thus increasing the potential for useful data to be generated.

Notwithstanding the common textbook definition of “Focus Group” by the latter writers and various others, in the context of this study I understand it in the sense that, whereas the textbook refers to a group of warm bodies or participants who are physically gathered in one room under one roof, I view it in the opposite way in that a Focus Group being “the group I am focussing on” could therefore also imply that they could be anywhere, apart from each other and could also be viewed abstractly.

As it is the duty of the catalyst-researcher, the topic for research is catalysed for the focus group dialogue session to take effect; in PAR, all involved in the research process are active participants throughout the entire research process (Greenwood and Levin, 1998:20); McNiff and Whitehead, 2006:1). Even though the topic of discussion is left up to the focus group, Gillis and Jackson (2002:235) states that “the facilitator typically provides some structure”. During a focus group, the researcher creates a supportive environment, which could as well be abstract, in which discussion and differing points of view are encouraged (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:2). Ideally, in PAR, all participant viewpoints are recognized and valued, as all participants have an opportunity to communicate (McTaggart, 1994:35).

It should be noted that due to the sudden Covid-19 pandemic that had befallen the whole world, the above approach could not be conducted purely as stated above but had to be integrated and conducted from an interview perspective to accommodate and abide by the strict lockdown regulations unexpectedly introduced not only by the University, but by the Government and the World Health Organisation to curb the corona virus. Therefore, telephonic interviews had to be conducted as the only alternative for verbal communication data collection for this study to still achieve its aims and objectives.

As alluded to earlier, this implies that a WhatsApp group had to be established to facilitate interaction/discussion. It should be noted that, unlike in the past where telephonic data collection meant only by means of a call, technological development and advancement has changed the understanding/perception thereof and now also

includes texting by using short message service (SMS) or WhatsApp or even video call.

4.8.3.1(ii) Interviews

Interviews are a method used in PAR which enables participants to describe their situation (Stringer, 1999:68). Interviewing is a theoretical approach to data collection, an engaging form of inquiry, and an appropriate method for collecting data regarding human experiences (Kaufman, 1992; Kvale, 1996). According to Reinhartz (1992:19), interviewing offers researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words, rather than the words of the researcher. The researcher explores a few general topics to assist in uncovering the participant's perspectives but demonstrates the utmost respect for how the participants frame and structure the responses (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:2).

According to Gillis and Jackson (2002:466), an interview is a face-to face verbal interaction in which the researcher attempts to elicit information from the respondent, usually through direct questioning. My view is that with the development and advancement of technology, one can also conduct an interview telephonically, as it was the case in this study. Telephonic in this regard refers to using the telephone to conduct the interview through WhatsApp. Both the researcher and the participant share and learn throughout the interviewing process in a reciprocal manner.

It is essential that interview questions be carefully formulated to ensure that participants are given maximum opportunity to present events and phenomena in their own terms and to follow agendas of their own choosing (Stringer, 1999:70). It should be noted that the interviews were unstructured and therefore the prepared questions were just basic guidelines and 'participants are not expected to strictly keep to them'. (Fontana & Frey, 1994:361). Hence, although students were from specific fields of study, they were afforded the opportunity to answer on any other field as well. Students were also given the liberty to freely answer the questions in any way they so wished. They were also not restricted and forced to answer all the questions. The reason being that I wanted to embrace diversity; secondly to afford them ample space to express themselves freely on whatsoever issue they feel like; another reason for that approach was that students may also have a plethora of answers to questions that are in other

fields that they are not necessarily in.

According to Morgan (1997), combining focus groups interviews with participant observation is useful in gaining access to the group, focusing on site selection, etc. while also useful for checking tentative conclusions and possible changes to be implemented.

4.9 REPORTING

During this stage, all group leaders were each given a chance to report on what they dialogued about whilst their main points they had agreed upon as a group were noted for everyone to participate. Whilst the group leader reported, leaders of all other groups were afforded the opportunity to ask questions, make comments whether they agree or disagree. Data generated here were recorded for purposes of analysis by the researcher, which is dealt with the next chapter of this study.

Therefore:

- **The Leader of the Political Science Students** reported about (but were not limited to) Political challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success, whilst the rest asked questions and commented.
- **The Leader of the Economic and Management Sciences Students** reported about (but were not limited to) Economic challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success, whilst the rest asked questions and commented.
- **The Leader of the Social Sciences Students** reported about (but were not limited to) Social challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success, whilst the rest asked questions and commented.

- **The Leader of the Technology Students** reported about (but were not limited to) Information and Communication Technology challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success, whilst the rest asked questions and commented.
- **The Leader of Environmental and Related Sciences Students** reported about (but were not limited to) Environmental and related challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success, whilst the rest asked questions and commented; and
- **The Leader of Legal Studies/Law Students** reported about (but were not limited to) Legal challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success, whilst the rest asked questions and commented.

Furthermore, the responses by each leader, were given to all other leaders to share, meaning at the end, every leader had answers of all other leaders at their disposal for comment or questioning. Furthermore, all data collected from this is to be stored in a safe and secured place as also required by the Ethical Clearance rules of the University of the Free State.

4.10 NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION DATA COLLECTION

As stated earlier Nonverbal Communication deals with behaviour/action and because that behaviour is a phenomenon that is viewed/ seen, logic therefore dictates that data collection must be done through observation. The use of Participant Observation is therefore undoubtedly the best method to collect nonverbal communication data for this study to achieve its aim and objectives. Like it is the nature of PAR, it should be borne in mind here, that I, as catalyst-researcher, become part of the process being observed and immersed in the setting, hearing, seeing, and experiencing the reality of the social situation with the participants as emphasised by Marshall and Rossman, (2006). Therefore, as the catalyst-researcher as a participant observer I did not only observe activities, participants, and physical aspects of the situation, but also engaged in activities appropriate to the social situation as I am also a student

myself at the same institution of higher learning where the data collection and study are conducted.

4.10.1 Participant Observation

For the qualitative research reasons mentioned above, and in line with Dargie, (1998) and Stringer (1999) Participant Observation, therefore, is an innovative qualitative research method of inquiry and a rich source of data collection that is commonly employed in PAR to collect Nonverbal Communication data. According to Gillis and Jackson, (2002) and Mulhall, (2003) participant observation provides the researcher with privileged access to research subjects in a social situation and captures the context of the social setting in which individuals function by recording subjective and objective human behaviour. The catalyst-researcher becomes part of the process being observed and immersed in the setting, hearing, seeing, and experiencing the reality of the social situation with the participants (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Therefore, the catalyst-researcher as a participant-observer not only observes activities, participants, and physical aspects of the situation, but also engages in activities appropriate to the social situation.

As method of data collection, Marshall and Rossman, (2006), further notes that Participant observation entails the systematic noting and recording of people, events, behaviours, and objects in the social setting using detailed and comprehensive field notes. First-hand knowledge of social behaviour is attained by the researcher as it unfolds over time in the social situation (Gillis and Jackson, 2002). As a result, the researcher obtains a broader view of what is occurring and can detail what is nonverbally communicated and what is implicit in the situation. Given the above, to me it does not only observe merely behaviour per se, but how the particular behaviour of such people, objects and events socially interacts with each other.

According to Du Plooy (2017:162) observations can be used for a variety of research problems (issues) and objectives, of which the following are examples:

- i) To explore an area during the preliminary stages of a research study, such as certain communication behaviours, the kind of people involved, and socio-temporal contexts or settings that can subsequently be studied more fully by means of other methods, such as a survey.

- ii) To explore and describe the applicability of the assumptions of particular theories; and/or
- iii) To explain the findings based on data previously collected, for example, by means of interviews.

Babbie and Mouton (2017:293) distinguish between two types of observation. Simple Observation when observation happens from outside and Participant Observation, when the researcher is simultaneously involved as a member of the research team. Data was collected as vast as possible, the reasons therefore was firstly, to cover a broad situation as much as possible; and secondly, to accommodate the aspect of inclusivity as much as possible. These are explained in line with definitions of the various Nonverbal Codes as outlined in the Literature Review (Chapter 3) of this study, as follows:

1. Exterior Physical Signs

Tubbs and Moss, (2000:8); Wood, (2012:10) refer to such exterior signs as **Artefacts** or the Artefactual Code. During my observation I looked at clothing, cosmetics, jewellery, furniture. Smith (2006:110) explains that the reason for observing these items is because as much they are not living beings, they certainly do convey their respective messages nonverbally.

2. Expressive Movements

Secondly, I observed expressive movements including eye movements, facial expressions, bodily movements, posture, etc, which are referred to by Hybels and Weaver (2015:7) as **Kinesics** or the Kinetic Code.

3. Space

Space is another aspect that I observed, the study of which is referred to in Nonverbal Communication as **Proxemics** (or the Proxemic Code); (Tubbs and Moss, 2000:8; Wood, 2012:10). Because the study puts emphasis upon behaviour, the use of both location/physical space as well as personal space was looked at.

4. Language Behaviour

Language Behaviour or Paralanguage (the Paralinguistic Code) is another aspect that was observed, which refers to stuttering, slips of the tongue, topics of discussion, etc); (Hybels and Weaver, 2015:7)

5. Time

The use of time is also very crucial when dealing with behavioural studies. In this regard I observed the use of time in terms of how long is the observed person doing what is observed. This is labelled by Tubbs and Moss, (2000:8) and Wood, (2012:10) in Nonverbal Communication as **Chronemics** (the Chronemic Code).

6. Touching Behaviour

Furthermore, I added for further observation, what various communication specialists refer to a sixth one, namely, Touching Behaviour, i.e., how, who, what and why people touch, which is referred to as **Haptics** or the Haptic Code. (Tubbs and Moss, 2000:8); (Wood, 2012:10), (Littlejohn, 2012:308) (Hybels and Weaver, 2015:7)

4.11 Field Notes

Because the study is dealing with behaviour, which cannot be divorced from nonverbal communication, Field Notes coupled with Participant Observation for data collection as outlined above was the most effective way to achieve the objectives of nonverbal communication data collection. Field notes were made in relation to every category or code of Nonverbal Communication as outlined above. I deemed it fit and very much easier to record students on video camera to use as a back-up for more effective data collection and analysis. Field notes were made in relation to every category or code of Nonverbal Communication as outlined above.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2014:180) loosely define Field Notes as “notes of observation made in the field”, which refers to the field of study in relation to the title

of the study. These are notes that are usually made about events, people, and objects. They further note that Field Notes are rather open, i.e., what is observed is not classified into previously determined categories as might happen with a log or some observation checklist. What is noted in Field Notes is also usually related to some question or issue that focuses observation, though observers are occasionally left to note their impressions without explicit guidance about a focus question or issue.

Whilst a thin line is drawn between Participant Observation and Ethnographic Studies, the data collection basically happens in the same manner. Like in Ethnographic Research, Du Plooy (2017:167) shows that Field Notes is an effective way of data collection, which emphasises that to understand human communication we need to study behaviour-related matters from the point of view of the events, subjects, etc within natural situations. Therefore, in this study, observation and its field notes-taking do not happen within a formal class set-up where students are restricted from expressing themselves and/or their behaviour in a free, liberated, and relaxed manner. It therefore happens outside in the open, but on the premises of the University of the Free State, where there are no such restrictions per se. This guarantees a true reflection of the behaviour of students, which in turn, makes it easier to collect sufficient data relating to a broad spectrum of nonverbal codes about what is observed for analysis and ensures truthful, reliable results.

4.12 CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, Chapter 4 focused on a research design and methodology to address the aim and objectives in the formulation of a Communication Strategy to foster Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution.

Qualitative research was used, and participatory action research was deemed to be the best qualitative method for this study. Interviews were conducted to gather data relating to verbal communication. Secondly, participant observation followed by field

notes were used to gather data for nonverbal communication with keen interest and focus upon the behaviour and movement of the students, whom are the target audience for this study. After methodology and discussion of the various approaches, data gathering paved the way to Chapter 5, which focuses upon analysis of the said data, findings made out of it and the interpretation thereof.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS/DATA GATHERED AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter focus is drawn upon data gathered or findings made (information and raw material) and presented for purposes of analysis to provide an answer to the research question (and its subsequent research objectives) namely, “How can Communication bring about Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution?”

Because the study revolves around Communication, data was gathered with the focus on the two main pillars namely Verbal Communication and Nonverbal Communication.

Thereafter Verbal Communication is analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis with the focus on the usage of language in terms of the verbal expressions by students in various sectors such as the political, economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and legal. Findings are also made after analysis of Nonverbal Communication has been conducted in terms of its various codes to look at behavioural factors relating to issues of social cohesion and more especially the title of the study and its aim and objectives.

5.2 COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Because the study is a communication study, communication is central to it. As such, findings focusing on the two main types/pillars of Communication, namely Verbal Communication and Nonverbal Communication are presented categorically below:

5.2.1 FINDINGS FROM VERBAL COMMUNICATION

As the title clearly states, this kind of communication is verbal. In line with the definition given in Chapter 3 of the Literature Review, Verbal Communication deals with the spoken word, sounds and other related matters and as alluded to by Wood (2012) in Chapter 3 as such constitutes only 7% of the entire realm of human communication.

Accordingly, findings regarding verbal communication through critical discourse analysis are presented below.

5.2.1.1 FINDINGS FROM STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

It should be noted that although participants were targeted for participation as per their fields of specialisation respectively (political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal) they were not restricted to answer on their specific fields only, but any of the different fields mentioned, bearing in mind that the interview was unstructured. The reason for the different fields was to ensure that the student population is well represented to get a broad picture of the prevailing situation especially in terms of its challenges to be addressed effectively.

Based upon the methods discussed in Chapter 4, the following findings were made from Verbal Communication data gathering:

Participant Number 1 (Technological)

There is segregation at the University of the Free State, which stems from language of instruction and race relations. Students from different races are separated through language of instruction and this causes segregation. Even computers used by students have only English and Afrikaans, but no African language, which makes studying easier for white students and other races must struggle. This goes further into student life and causes them to keep distance from each other.

Change can only come if there is one language of instruction which will bring people together and lead to integration on campus.

Participant Number 2 (Environmental)

One of the factors contributing to the lack of social cohesion is racism. The division between races is evident where majority of black students largely group themselves together and white students do the same. The fact that white students have a choice to be taught either their home language Afrikaans, or English, is unfair. There is a sense of a predominance of Afrikaner culture on the university premises.

The environment is not friendly to all races cultures and beliefs as there are only European/Afrikaner statues and busts and especially male dominated. Even buildings have European/Afrikaner male dominated names and as such discriminate against blacks and females across all races.

Several students from poor backgrounds are living below the breadline and cannot afford to pay for their education and other services that need finances related to the studies. Unlike those with financial/economic stability, those challenges bring divisions among the rich and the poor. As such many face challenges of deregistration, etc.

English should be the only medium of instruction that cuts across all. Poor students reaching a deadlock in paying for their studies should be financially assisted to complete their studies. The environment should be inclusive, reflective, and representative of statues/ busts of all races/colours and genders.

Participant Number 3 (Technological)

One of the problems is that white students appear to be more technologically advanced compared to those of other races. It makes them therefore perform better in their studies. Above that, Information and Communications Technology Laboratories are largely occupied by non-white students. Another challenge that may hinder social cohesion could be attributed to the fact that we have not defined ourselves in a South African context.

We as South Africans need to turn to who we are, explore what is our culture and solutions. Once we have done that we can become more empathetic towards one another and see those that are “the other” as part of us, which will ultimately contribute towards the success of social cohesion.

Participant Number 4 (Socio-Cultural)

I think one of the biggest challenges for social cohesion at the University of the Free State is that we have a largely encumbered system, which makes quick, effective change virtually impossible. This coupled with a somewhat disinterested student and staff body leaves a lot to be desired. Many divisions and committees do a lot of talking

and planning but implementing is slow and in some cases non-existent. We are not financially strong and do not have sufficient other necessary resources to do everything we should be doing especially with regards to a rich, dynamic multi-purpose curriculum. A brilliantly delivered curriculum requires innovative, engaging content, great teachers, and a supportive administration. If students and staff were generally engaged to dialogue about curriculum and culture, social cohesion would be a natural by-product.

Participant Number 5 (Political)

My view is that divisions are caused by different political formations in the university. Majority of parties recruit and discriminate amongst students based upon their race.

It works much better when they only allow non-political student associations who have the general student population's interests at heart, to participate in elections.

Participant Number 6 (Political)

Political Challenges are outstandingly a hindrance for social cohesion. Racism is core to this and many other related challenges. My experience while driving with 4 white students on a research tour to attend a science conference in Stellenbosch, only one of them would report to me, whereas others not, even if I talk to them, they will just look at each other and not mention a single word.

Participant Number 7 (Legal)

In my view I would say various political/racial issues are posing huge challenges for social cohesion. A lot need to be ironed out to foster social cohesion. Racial imbalances should be outrooted. What is contradicting is for example a faculty such as that of law, which is supposed to be a custodian for and advocate for equality, equity, non-racism, human rights, is the one that is predominantly white, and predominantly staffed/ran by white males.

Language is a huge problem as a lot of material/information is still mainly in Afrikaans, which is spoken by the minority in contradiction to the large English-speaking majority, who must first ask for assistance for translation to understand and make sense of the content, discriminating towards especially black students.

Participant Number 8 (Environmental)

Economic and social issues appear to pose huge challenges for social cohesion at the University. Students' economic capabilities/affordability differs largely and as such leaves gaps between them leading to feelings of exclusion and distancing from each other.

The environment is not friendly and accommodative/inclusive of all, in terms of signposts, names of buildings, street names, statues/busts, monuments/walls of remembrance.

Encourage more group work and dialogue from time to time to bring various students together. Make English the only medium of instruction for all to understand each other and draw closer to one another.

Participant Number 9 (Legal)

In my opinion the problem is more of a social nature than anything else; all others fall under or stem from it. Therefore, to achieve social cohesion, one will have to deploy systems theory for a holistic solution.

Participant Number 10 (Economic)

National politics inform micro politics at these institutions. South Africa is filled with inequality, and this does not vanish when students join the University of the Free State.

A major solution would be to solve corruption and the distribution of wealth. This can help in alleviating imbalances.

Participant Number 11 (Socio-Cultural)

A Challenge in achieving social cohesion in the University of the Free State is that it is too diverse with students from different cultures, religions, or even different countries, who out of insecurity/fear choose to rather make friends or group with those from the same backgrounds or same country. They also do it to easily associate or fit in or at least the closest they can identify or relate with in a particular environment to feel a sense of being at home or belonging.

The University does not do enough and in some cases does not do anything at all to facilitate unity and social cohesion.

A solution to this is for example that all first year UFS 101 students should be placed in diverse groups of five, in terms of race, origin, culture, etc to learn more from each other. At the end of the year, they should submit a report of that.

Participant Number 12 (Environmental)

The exposure of each race's environment (community) and the historical and cultural background they respectively come from makes students believe in a divided life as espoused by apartheid brutality. It becomes therefore a challenge to reach out to each other. Lack of knowledge about each other's background and interests also deepens the divide amongst students.

White students need to be exposed through tours to black students' areas and living conditions and black students also need to be exposed to white students' areas and living conditions to get a sense of each other's' lives.

5.2.1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Findings Discussed – Verbal Communication

In line with Van Dijk, (2003:255) Bloor and Bloor, (2007:2) and Weiss and Wodak (2003) I found discourse in data manifesting itself in different forms and as such could have notable implications as follows:

- Political discourse was found mainly in data gathered from all students in which for example, the concept of "racism" mentioned across all data. (Participant 5 and 6)
- Economic discourse was found in which students raise issues of funding especially for those who are from poor, previously disadvantaged/marginalised families and other issues relating to exclusion of especially the poorest of the poor; (Participants 2 and 10)
- Socio-cultural discourse shows that there are huge gaps/differences in that most students socialise/associate with others based on their culture, language and

gender and political affiliation, which excludes others from associating with them. Furthermore, the name KOVSIE, (an acronym, meaning *Kollege van die Oranje Vrystaat*) for example, is used in a wrong context; (Participants 4 and 11)

- Technological discourse was found in that because of development and modernisation, lots of terminology/vocabulary/language usage most things become digitised. (Participants 1 and 3)
- Environmental discourse found because of the naming of campus streets and buildings that are not representative of all and as such lead to huge debates such as those during the #SteynMustFall protests. (Participants 8 and 12)
- Because all the above-mentioned are governed by legislation, legal discourse was found to cut across all sectors and as such discourse results when the question begs: “what does the law/policy/rules/regulations/legislation say?” (Participants 7 and 9)

5.2.2 NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION FINDINGS

5.2.2.1 Participant Observation, Nonverbal Codes and Field Notes

Whilst making observations of nonverbal behaviour and its manifestation in its different forms or codes as explained by Tubbs and Moss (2000:8) and Wood (2012:10), the following findings were made about them:

(i) Exterior Physical Signs (Artefacts)

Findings about artefacts such as clothing, cosmetics, jewellery, and the environment in general indicate differences and some cases vast differences.

- Political differences are seen in the different styles of clothes and messages of their political parties, which already shows different ideologies, such as those of FF+, ANC and DA.
- Some African students wearing traditional clothes bearing particular significance, for example traditional healers with their beads, etc, are mostly seen not associating with other students.

- Cultural differences were found in appearance of students, expressing their different cultures they come from by their clothes and others even written on their t-shirts “I am a proud Motswana.”
- To an extent one could distinguish between the economically/financially haves with expensive clothes and the have-nots by the labels of their clothing.
- Signs and names in the environment such as those of buildings are only of White people and are therefore to an extent offensive especially to most students of other races.
- The University’s premise has only statues and busts of white people, especially males.

(ii) Kinetics (Expressive Movements)

Secondly, data gathered from general expressive movements (including eye movements, facial expressions, bodily movements, posture) led to the following findings:

- Findings about expressive movements show that facial expressions and gestures indicate that white students express themselves more freely and friendly towards other whites and the same happens in the case of African students towards each other.
- African female students tend to slap their thigh when expressing their concerns, especially in a cheeky way during an argument.
- The study finds that LGBTQI students are more freely expressing themselves with their gesturing, their facial expressions and body movements towards everyone, regardless of their race and or gender.
- Findings about expressive movements by most students also differ largely between the formal class setup in relation to the open public setup.
- Whilst black male students are used to greet by shaking hands or touching each other’s fists or even giving each other a ‘high five’, their white counterparts prefer to only nod their heads when greeting especially when they greet African students.

(iii) Proxemics (Space)

Regarding Space, findings about the use of both geographical/physical space as well as personal space, the following findings were made, that:

- From a political point of view, some students associate/group themselves in accordance with the political party they are affiliated to; This is seen in their regalia when they are together.
- Some students associate/group themselves according to racial/ethnic preference; others, according to their field of study, LGBTQI-status. LGBTQI students are seen by their behaviour, especially their hand gestures and how they walk.
- Even student accommodation is arranged largely according to race. This is witnessed especially during orientation that most of a particular race live in the same residence.
- In class students also choose to sit next to their racial, political, gender preferences; This is seen in classes they attend together.
- The environment is not friendly to all students, implying that space is still portrayed as according to apartheid planning, though in a democratic dispensation. Statues are those of white people; names of buildings are those of white people only.
- Distance is huge impediment for many students to and from campus especially those from the township, depending on public transport. This is seen at the mini-taxi-rank on the university's premises as well as other students walking from the campus to down, sometimes in severe weather conditions.

(iv) Paralanguage (Language Behaviour)

- Language Behaviour was found to differ amongst various students across class and cultural/racial divides. Pronunciation and accent differ in that student from the so-called Model C schools tend to speak more like their white folks, whereas those from township schools would speak English with an accent of their African Vernacular they are originating from. As such the Model-C ones would be given preference during auditions to be radio presenters on the Campus' Radio Kopsie FM, which I find purely as a challenge of a superiority versus an inferiority complex that influences students' perception and choices, not ruling out racism.

- The study found that African and coloured students are loud when they are excited or in an argument, which many white students find noisy, irritating and therefore unacceptable.

(v) Chronemics (Time)

In terms of Time in relation to behaviour, the study found that:

- Many students experience time constraints that are caused by various factors due to lack of various resources that their studies are reliable upon.
- As such, late coming by black students is usually referred to by well-off especially white students as 'African Time', which is to an extent derogatory and offensive to black students.

(vi) Haptics (Touching Behaviour)

As far as touching behaviour is concerned, the following findings were made from data gathered:

- Touching happens more between students of the same race and mostly between the same genders in a particular race.
- African and Coloured female students find it 'customary' or almost compulsory to hug and kiss each other when they meet, to show appreciation, a phenomenon that hardly happens amongst their white counterparts.
- Male students are used to greet by shaking hands or touching each other's fists or giving each other a 'high five'. However, the study found that such greeting only happens between those of the same race.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This Chapter dealt with a very crucial point for the study, namely the Presentation of findings by the team consisting of myself and the co-researchers. The healthy cooperation between us largely helped us to gather and present data and mainly for purposes of verbal communication. Of the plethora of responses received, only 12 outstanding ones were taken into consideration for presentation in line with the

requirements of Participatory Action Research. Data gathered for Nonverbal Communication analysis, during which Participant Observation was used, subsequently led to the need to make field notes about what was observed, after which findings were also presented here. Regarding critical discourse analysis, the study found that discourse manifested itself politically, economically, socially, technologically, environmentally as well as legally. Findings made here are discussed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of research is to 'Find' something and more so for this research/study find something and contribute towards research and the body of knowledge.

Having arrived at this stage of the study, findings made in the previous chapter, this Chapter's focus is to discuss those findings. As such findings from the Chapter 5 which relates to verbal communication and nonverbal communication will be discussed in line with the literature and theoretical framework found in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. This is done bearing in mind the challenges faced by higher education institutions, solutions attempted, favourable conditions, threats posed as well as indicators of success.

Findings that emerged are as follows:

6.2 FINDINGS DISCUSSED

6.2.1 Theoretical Framework

Having looked at various theoretical frameworks in the field of Communication and Social Cohesion in general, as well as having explored the different era/moments of research, Bricolage was found to be the best suitable theoretical framework for this type of study. In this regard reference is made to theoretical bricolage, by which myself as researcher or Bricoleur read widely before applying my mind in the use and contextualisation of Bricolage as lens in this study. With the aim of designing a communication strategy to foster social cohesion in a higher education institution, the core focus of the Bricolage is the use of communication throughout. Grounded on the research question approached from a diversity of theoretical positions, according to Baker and Nelson, (2005:32) theories of the dominant, imperialist, and participatory paradigms are used by the Bricolage to look at the role of communication in achieving social cohesion in a higher education institution where it is non-existent. Participation

from different perspectives of stakeholders from political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental, and legal fields had been taken into consideration to produce more rigorous insights into socio-political and educational phenomena as proposed by Kincheloe, (2001:679, 2005:323) and Kincheloe and Berry (2004:23).

The above is in line with the title of this study in terms of aspects of social cohesion (socio-political) and higher education (pedagogical/educational). This was done having taken into consideration the challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success in the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal aspects of the institution of higher education.

6.2.2 Literature Reviewed

During review of literature relating to the title of this study, it was found that various writers did not explore it in much detail per se, which could be due to various reasons that differ from one context to another as well as the scope of study that such research was limited to. Bastedo (2003:18) for example, only focused on European Union Universities and more specifically only looked at migrant policy relating to European Union citizens. Based upon that, I found that it was mainly among Europeans that the study was conducted, meaning among people who were predominantly white and largely sharing the same culture and life interests. That did not really give a complete picture regarding the status quo of matters to achieve social cohesion in a higher education institution.

In Kenya the situation is almost the same as in the case of Bastedo's (2003:18) study. However, in the case above the population under scrutiny was predominantly white/European, here they are predominantly black/African. I found that the focus in Kenyan universities was mainly among ethnic groups, making it more of a predominantly cultural study. Social Cohesion in a Kenyan institution of higher education therefore implies bringing different ethnic groups together.

However, this study, which is conducted in South Africa in a South African University, is spreading its wings far wider and broader than the two above. Having conducted research on the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal

sectors of higher education institutions, it attempted to investigate the title more intensely and widely.

Critical Bricolage, Social Bricolage as well as Political Bricolage are evident in the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 of this study. This is indicative of the complexities in various aspects of diversity in those countries' institutions of higher learning and the role of Bricolage in dealing with such.

6.2.3 Research Methodology

Regarding this, Methodological Bricolage is witnessed in Chapter 4, which deals with the practical aspect of research. Because of the vastness of the fields of Communication and Social Cohesion as well as aspects of diversity in the study, various methodologies had to be used to be in line with the Participatory paradigm and Participatory Action Research and their related literature.

Taking into consideration the title of this specific study, the conditions related thereto as well as the aim and objectives it intended to achieve, I found that, unlike the linear, colonial approaches to communication, the use of the Participatory Action Research approach as Research Methodology as the best suitable to conduct research of this kind. This is supported by gurus like Figueroa, et al (2002), Kemmis & McTaggart (2014), Babbie & Mouton (2017) as well as Du Plooy (2017).

Because Communication is core here and informed by democratic principles, literature relating to the study further found that Participatory Development Communication is best suitable for a study of this nature to achieve its aim and objectives as insisted by Freire (1994) and Harbemas (1984) and further supported by Servaes & Malikhao, (2008). Critical Bricolage therefore is seen unfolding where different perspectives are taken into consideration and critiqued. Hence Greyfelder (2002:4) notes that communication for social change is valued as a process in and of itself. The act of community problem identification, group decision making, action planning, collective action and implementation are critical to how a community grapples with a serious issue.

6.3 THE INTEGRATED TRANSFORMATION PLAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE – Discussion of Findings of a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)

The history of the University of the Free State shows that for decades this institution of higher learning did not bother itself about social cohesion due to the apartheid regime under which it was established, whose main aim and objectives was to divide and rule. This implies that their aim was the direct opposite of social cohesion, which has left higher education institutions in a dire situation, struggling to bring about social cohesion.

Looking at the situation at the University of the Free State, despite various attempts in fostering social cohesion, the status quo seems not to have made any significant change or strides over the years. How a SWOT Analysis about the Strategy/Integrated Transformation Plan of the University of the Free State (as advised by Strategists Venter (2012:2) and Janse Van Rensburg (2013:2) yielded findings which are discussed below:

6.3.1 Strengths

- The Idea, Communication and compilation of the strategy was already in itself a good attempt in addressing the issues/challenges at hand
- The willingness of Management to work together to make it a reality
- Most resources are already available, and some are not difficult to acquire.
- It states that the Plan does not belong to an individual or a particular group, but it is the responsibility of everyone belonging to the University.

6.3.2 Weaknesses

- Since the adoption of the Strategy 2017/2018 – 2022, after failure of the previous plans, the University has achieved very little through it.
- Time constraints are experienced due to Covid-19 Lockdown restrictions
- Financial Constraints experienced due to various reasons
- Unwillingness by several students to cooperate to make social cohesion a reality.
- Political differences resulted due to different ideologies

- Different perceptions about various issues resulted due to cultural differences.

6.3.3 Opportunities

- Adoption/Introduction of policy on a universal access would help with inclusivity, especially in accommodating/inclusion of students with disabilities.
- Harnessing flexibility in Communication, submitting assessments and presenting lectures to students.
- The openness of the Strategy/Plan could benefit a lot from the contributions of students from time to time.
- Promote University Culture that does not exclude or intimidate, but encourages people to experiment with and challenge established conceptions of the world while feeling part of a community

6.3.4 Threats

- With the time constraints/ very little time at its disposal, there is no guarantee that the University would be able to achieve its intended vision/aim and objectives as promised in the adopted Strategy 2017/2018 – 2022.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its related Lockdown restrictions, several objectives may not be achievable.
- Digitization and opting for online studies and other related matters, might affect many if not all sectors and as such that could have serious implications or changes in the planning of the University; thus, the overall Strategy of the University could be affected by that and as such be changed.
- Dragging by some students to cooperate threatens social mobility and as such social cohesion.
- Budgetary/Financial Constraints are also a threat in achieving social cohesion.

6.4 COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS FINDINGS DISCUSSED

Because the study is a communication study, communication is central to it. As such, findings focusing on the two main types/pillars of Communication are discussed categorically below:

6.4.1 VERBAL COMMUNICATION

As it clearly states this kind of communication is verbal. In line with the definition given in Chapter 3 of the Literature Review, Verbal Communication deals with the spoken word, sounds and other related matters and as alluded to by Wood (2012) above as such constitutes only 7% of the entire realm of human communication. Accordingly, findings regarding verbal communication through critical discourse analysis are discussed underneath.

6.4.1.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Findings Discussed

In line with Van Dijk, (2003:255) Bloor and Bloor, (2007:2) and Weiss and Wodak (2003) I found discourse in data manifesting itself in different forms and as such could have notable implications as follows:

- Political discourse that was found mainly in data gathered from all students in which for example, the concept of “racism” mentioned across all data clearly shows that it is one of/if not the main bone of contention, which clearly needs to be outrooted.
- Economic discourse that was found in which students raise issues of funding especially for those who are from poor, previously disadvantaged/marginalised families and other issues relating to exclusion of especially the poorest of the poor, is viewed in a serious light and described as discriminatory and insensitive.
- Socio-cultural discourse shows that there are huge gaps/differences in that most students socialise/associate with others based on their culture, language and gender and political affiliation, which excludes others from associating with them. Furthermore, the name KOVSIE, (an acronym, meaning *Kollege van die Oranje Vrystaat*) for example, is used in a wrong context in that, although the institution started as a teaching College in 1904, it is no more that, but a multi-purpose, multi-disciplinary University that far outweighs the purpose of a mere college.
- Technological discourse that was found in that because of development and modernisation, lots of terminology/vocabulary/language usage must be developed on par and as such discourse/Communication becomes digitised.

- Environmental discourse found because of the naming of campus streets and buildings that are not representative of all and as such lead to huge debates such as those during the #SteynMustFall protests.
- Because all the above-mentioned are governed by legislation, legal discourse was found to cut across all sectors and as such discourse results when the question begs: “what does the law/policy/rules/regulations/legislation say?”

6.4.2 NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION FINDINGS DISCUSSED

6.4.2.1 Participant Observation, Nonverbal Codes and Field Notes

Findings of Observations of nonverbal behaviour and its manifestation in its different forms or codes as explained by Tubbs and Moss (2000:8) and Wood (2012:10), are discussed below:

1. Exterior Physical Signs (Artefacts)

Findings about artefacts such as clothing, cosmetics, jewellery, and the environment in general indicate differences and some cases vast differences.

- Political differences are seen in the different styles of clothes and messages of their political parties, which already shows different ideologies by different student formations e.g., those of FF+, ANC/SASCO, DA;
- Some African students wearing traditional clothes bearing particular significance, for example traditional healers with their beads, are mostly seen not associating with other students, which causes divisions amongst students and hinder the fostering of social cohesion.
- Cultural differences found in appearance of students, expressing their different cultures they come from also contributes towards students distancing themselves from others.
- To an extent one could distinguish between the economically/financially haves and the have-nots by the labels of their clothing, which worsens a complex of inferiority and simultaneously a complex of superiority amongst students from those backgrounds respectively.
- Signs and names in the environment such as those of buildings are only of White/Afrikaner people and are therefore to an extent offensive especially to the

majority of students of other races. These and others, are sensitizing racism and as such promotes divisions especially between blacks and whites.

- The University's premise has only statues and busts of white/Afrikaner males. This does not only discriminate against other races, but also discriminates against white females as if those discriminated against had not contributed anything towards education and the general history of South Africa – which is also selfish and biased.

2. Kinetics (Expressive Movements)

Secondly, data gathered from general expressive movements (including eye movements, facial expressions, bodily movements, posture) led to findings discussed below:

- Findings about expressive movements show that facial expressions and gestures indicate that white students express themselves more freely and friendly towards other whites and the same happens in the case of black and coloured students. That could largely be ascribed to their cultural backgrounds they come from.
- African female students tend to slap their thigh when expressing their concerns, especially in a cheeky way during an argument, which threatens some from the white community, because they are not used to it.
- The study finds that LGBTQI students are more freely expressing themselves with their gesturing, their facial expressions and body movements towards everyone, regardless of their race and or gender.
- Findings about expressive movements by most students also differ largely between the formal class setup in relation to the open public setup outside.
- Whilst black male students are used to greet by shaking hands or touching each other's fists or even giving each other a 'high five', their white counterparts prefer to only nod their heads when greeting especially when they greet their black counterparts.

3. Proxemics (Space)

Regarding Space, findings about the use of both geographical/physical space as well as personal space, the following findings were made, that:

- From a political point of view, some students associate/group themselves in accordance with the political party they are affiliated to, which sometimes is because in their ideologies/what they stand for or out of fear of victimization citing that they connive with the opposition.
- Some students associate/group themselves according to racial/ethnic preference; others, according to their field of study, LGBTQI-status, etc. This gives them peace of mind and/or a sense of belonging.
- Even student accommodation is arranged largely according to race, which is a serious challenge for social cohesion and against the constitution of the country.
- Although the LGBTQI community on campus feel ignored and discriminated against, their demand for their own residences cannot be entertained, because it causes further divisions and works directly against the aim of fostering social cohesion.
- In class students also choose to sit next to their racial, political, gender preferences. I see this as a choice of every individual unlike in a school set-up where the teacher makes a point to arrange learners according to his wishes and aspirations; However, such individual rights and choices and rights/preferences jointly cause huge hindrances and sabotage the process of fostering social cohesion.
- The environment is not friendly to all students, implying that space is still portrayed as according to apartheid planning, though in a democratic dispensation. This makes students from other races feel excluded and strange in their own country.
- Distance is a huge impediment for many students to and from campus especially those from the township, depending on public transport and affordability by those from poor backgrounds having continuous struggles of getting finances.

4. Paralanguage (Language Behaviour)

- Language Behaviour found to differ amongst various students across class and cultural/racial divides clearly draws the line between different races. As such students must compromise their mother-tongue and speak English to

accommodate one another. Pronunciation and accent differ in that student from the so-called Model C schools tend to speak more like their white folks, whereas those from township schools would speak English with an accent of their African Vernacular they are originating from. As such the Model-C ones would be given preference during auditions to be radio presenters on the Campus' Radio Kopsie FM.

- The study found that African and some coloured students are loud when they are excited or in an argument, which many white students find noisy, irritating and therefore unacceptable. This to me has to an extent to do with physique as well as cultural background where the individual student comes from.
- One outstanding issue I found was that whereas most if not all black/African students compromise their vernacular/mother-tongue and rather prefer English as sole medium of instruction for all students in all subjects in all classes, white/Afrikaner students do not have a problem with that as long as they be taught in Afrikaans as their mother-tongue. To me: notwithstanding the latter's preference or otherwise put, 'violating their rights', the question begs: "Based on the University's capacity in terms of financial and other necessary resources, is it viable/possible and how?"

5. Chronemics (Time)

In terms of Time in relation to behaviour, the study found that:

- Many students experience time constraints that are caused by various factors due to lack of various resources that their studies are reliable upon. This links especially with the financial constraints discussed earlier on. It can be spoken the same about white students, because white students have cars, which helps them largely in terms of mobility and as such are able to achieve a lot in a small-time frame.
- As such, late coming by black students is usually referred to by well-off especially white students as 'African Time', which is to an extent derogatory and offensive to black students, because majority of them do not have the luxuries they have.

6. Haptics (Touching Behaviour)

As far as touching behaviour is concerned, the following findings were made from data gathered:

- Touching happens more between students of the same race and mostly between the same genders in a particular race. When it comes to this point, reasons are more personal and individual.
- African and Coloured female students seem to find it ‘customary’ or almost compulsory to hug and kiss each other when they meet, to show appreciation, a phenomenon that hardly happens amongst their white counterparts.
- Male students are used to greet by shaking hands or touching each other’s fists or giving each other a ‘high five’. However, the study found that such greeting only happens between those of the same race.
- Coinciding with Kinetics above, African female students tend to touch/slap their thigh when expressing their concerns, especially in a cheeky way during an argument, which threatens some from the white community, because they are not used to it, thinking that they become violent when doing that.

The above findings directly link with the literature reviewed and theoretical framework used. This implies that what the various writers wrote about communication and social cohesion and all their aspects, is clearly revealed in the lives and behaviours of the participants and university community at large. Diversity is core, which goes along with complexities. This is where I am putting the emphasis that no other lens could better be used for this study than that of Bricolage.

6.5 FINDINGS IN RESPONSE TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

6.5.1 Research Objectives

Against the background of the research problem, the objectives of the study are discussed to answer the main question/title of the study, namely “How can communication bring about social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution?” Objectives here include discussion of Challenges, Solutions, Conducive Conditions, Threats, and Indicators of Success.

1. Challenges faced in pursuit of fostering Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions with the focus on Communication

The study shows that global challenges hampering the fostering of Social Cohesion in Institutions of Higher Education include the following:

According to Heyneman (2003:73) the first has been how to conceive of a nation and in this regard, more specifically a higher education community, that has significant ethnic divisions as well as strong political forces that emphasize one ethnic group over the others. He goes further and states that the second has stemmed from a precipitous collapse of public expenditures and subsequent growth in education corruption. (Heyneman, 2004:638)

Bastedo (2016) noticed that various Institutions of Higher Education have largely failed to adapt to social changes for social cohesion due to entrenched beliefs in university culture.

Evidence by Schoepf (2004) shows that many universities were likely to hinder social cohesion to happen due to clandestine agendas by a few, especially elite in their leadership.

2. Possible solutions in bringing about Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions through Communication

Possible solutions out of many others according to Heyneman (2003:74) include for example in Indonesia and South Africa courses have been designed to serve as forums for students to consider contemporary issues from multiple, and sometimes unpopular perspectives. This has been true for the teaching of the social and political antecedents of the HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa as well as the teaching of interreligious tolerance and ecumenicalism within public Islamic universities in Indonesia.

Bastedo (2016:4) realised that in the Netherlands, innovative contributions have not necessarily been disseminated from the central university administration, but rather

from innovative faculty acting in their roles as 'public intellectuals' on controversial issues such as the integration of Muslim immigrants. In the former Soviet republics, student-led mock courtrooms have been established to try corrupt faculty-complete with defence attorneys, public prosecutors, and professional judges to help students understand their rights. He goes further to say that the decision to allow foreign universities has helped establish local precedents or relatively corruption-free institutions. There are also many instances of faculty 'resisters' to corruption-the 15-20% who declare their adherence to impartiality and their imperviousness to corrupt pressures even in the face of administrative sanction and unsustainably low remuneration.

In South Africa both top-down and bottom-up responses to the HIV/ AIDS pandemic exist side by side, with the former serving as a provider of science and technical understanding and based on the interests of specific faculty and departments, the latter providing debate over the social racial, and political ramifications of the crisis. In some faculties, all students are expected to take a public health HIV/AIDS course in efforts to bridge social divides over how the crisis is interpreted (Schoepf, Treichler, 1995:204). Universities in South Africa have also been active in outreach activities involving local high schools and the community at large in which a variety of views and approaches to the problem are represented.

3. Conditions conducive to foster Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions

Where conditions are favourable institution-led approaches to social cohesion can be highly effective. As for such conditions Gumucio (2001:5) advocates that sustainability of social change is more likely if the individuals and community most affected own the process and content of communication. As such, Communication for social change and cohesion would be empowering, horizontal (versus top-down), give a voice to the previously unheard members of the community, and be biased towards local content and ownership. Also, as members of less dominant groups attain social mobility through university, vertical social capital is created. However, while campus diversity does not ensure social mobility, it is a necessary precondition for it (Karen & Dougherty, 2005). Figueroa, et al (2002:8) adds that a community should be the

agents of their own change. This implies that emphasis should shift from persuasion and the transmission of information from outside technical experts to dialogue, debate and negotiation on issues that resonate with members of the community. In addition, emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to social norms, policies, culture, and a supporting environment. Therefore, social cohesion can happen by means of developmental participatory communication (Servaes, 2001:5) through a process of community dialogue leading to collective action that affects the welfare of individual members and automatically and collectively, that of the community (White, 2003:51).

4. Possible threats against achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution.

Threats posed include unwillingness of certain groups (social mobility) especially after having been influenced by key role players, not to participate in matters which could bring about social cohesion. This could be because of a lack of mutual respect, which according to Pfaff, Baxter, and Jack (2014:1148) leads to a break in communication. Consequently, non-participation could lead to social exclusivity. The unavailability or insufficiency of social capital poses another threat; difficulty to access resources; the lack of commitment; and lastly, even if all the above are available, ineffective, or non-implementation could also pose a huge threat to the achievement of social cohesion, especially where the communication is poor. Negative criticism because of unforgiveness in the sense of who is to blame for the prevailing status quo of matters could also threaten the realisation of social cohesion.

5. Indicators of success in achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution.

Firstly, according to Heynemann (2003:74) success will be indicated when the university experience offers abundant opportunities to bring individuals from diverse backgrounds into close contact with one another so that they may begin to bridge community divides. The importance of such activities in creating the "networks of engagement" that can translate into bridging social capital has been well documented (Varshney, 2002).

A **second** indicator of success is when vertical social capital is created, as and when community members of less dominant groups attain social mobility through the institution of higher learning.

A **third** aspect of the university's role in the promotion of social cohesion is the influence that it can have on the development, improvement, and management of compliance mechanisms used to assert social control.

A **fourth** implication for higher education, based on the social capital model of social cohesion development, relates to the formation and socialization of shared values among higher education's various constituent groups including the public.

It should be noted that regardless of how various programmes are instituted, their activities work best when implemented within the context of a critical-thinking educational environment – an abstract environment with a liberated thinking; as well as a physical environment that is representative of all cultures to make everyone feel a sense of belonging.

Lastly, but not least, an outstanding one is the language issue which is a crisis in most institutions of higher education and becomes a challenge for many as to which medium of instruction to use.

6.6 CONCLUSION

With reference to the theoretical framework discussed earlier in Chapter 2, one can see the link between it and the findings made from the study. From the Findings one can realise that the university an institution with a wide variety of cultures, beliefs, etc. Because of that, complexity is the order of the day. Bricolage is therefore the best suitable approach to deal with complexity for the purposes of this study. To facilitate the process of participatory development communication the theory of Habermas (1984) is used to open up communicative space and the smooth run of the dialogue. Lastly, from the general findings of the study it is clear that the answer to challenges explored earlier lies in proper, healthy communication. Because it is about

communication, behaviour is at stake here and for this reason the theory of Ubuntu makes huge sense in a study of this nature. The question begs how can Ubuntu bring about change and foster social cohesion in the University community? The answer to this is to strictly follow its principles, which according to Tutu (1999) Ubuntu includes the following values: “Communality, Dignity, Respect, Value, acceptance, sharing, co-responsibility, humaneness, social justice, fairness, personhood, morality, group solidarity, compassion, joy, love, fulfilment, conciliation...” amongst others. From an ethical point of view, Ubuntu ethics are defined as a set of values central among which are reciprocity, common good, peaceful relations, emphasis on human dignity, and the value of human life as well as consensus, tolerance, and mutual respect. (Tutu, 1999; Mahlomaholo, 2013)

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Having explored various avenues and exhausted various sources relating to the title of this study, this Chapter finally answers the question: “How can Communication foster Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution?”

Secondary to the overarching research question above are:

- **What challenges are faced in pursuit of fostering Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions?**

Firstly, the lack of efficient and effective communication, which may lead to issues contributing towards the lack of an institutional culture with ethnic divisions which does not speak the language of unity such as in universities in the former Soviet Republics (Heyneman, 2003:73).

Secondly, the lack of social cohesion and related challenges existing lead to existence of an imbalanced, one-sided environment which communicates and promotes division, complicates integration, and leads to conflict - a phenomenon evident in for example universities in the Netherlands struggling to integrate Muslim students (Bastedo, 2008:320).

Thirdly, epistemological challenges relating to matters with the curriculum at the centre, such as for example, which language to use as medium of instruction like some institutions in South Africa (Soudien, 2008:36).

Fourthly, policy and regulatory compliance issues, including equal accessibility of information by all affected, protocol, etc, which pose challenges of inclusivity and staff tensions (NMMU, 2005:10).

Lastly, interpersonal communication on and relations across different races, cultures, etc, which appear to be a complicated task to overcome. (Figueroa, et al, 2002:14).

- **What possible communication solutions exist in bringing about Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions?**

1. Leadership should explain and defend the role of the Higher Education Institution.
2. They should be Public Debate on sensitive issues.
3. There should be Engagement with international scholarly communities.
4. It should have Curriculum that reflects social problems.
5. Empirical research should be done on social Issues.
6. It must have Students and faculty who are broadly representative of the wider population.
7. Linkages with the wider community should be built and strengthened.
8. Academic freedom must be the order of the day.
9. There should be Institutional autonomy to Publicly available standards of student and faculty conduct.
11. It must have a transparent process of adjudication for misconduct.
12. It should source multiple sources of finance aside from government.

- **Which conditions are conducive to foster Social Cohesion in Higher Education Institutions?**

While campus diversity does not ensure social mobility, it is a necessary precondition for it (Karen & Dougherty, 2005). Figueroa, et al (2002:8) adds that a community should be the agents of their own change. This implies that emphasis should shift from persuasion and the transmission of information from outside technical experts to dialogue, debate and negotiation on issues that resonate with members of the community. In addition, emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to social norms, policies, culture, and a supporting environment. Therefore, social cohesion can happen by means of developmental participatory communication (Servaes, 2001:5) through a process of community dialogue leading to collective action that affects the welfare of individual members and automatically and collectively, that of the community (White, 2003:51).

- **Which possible threats against achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution exist?**

Threats posed include unwillingness of certain groups (social mobility) especially after having been influenced by key role players, not to participate in matters which could bring about social cohesion. This is usually the case seen amongst white European people in various countries' institutions in general. This could be because of a lack of mutual respect, which according to Pfaff, Baxter, and Jack (2014:1148) leads to a break in communication. Consequently, non-participation could lead to social exclusivity. The unavailability or insufficiency of social capital poses another threat; difficulty to access resources; the lack of commitment; and lastly, even if all the above are available, ineffective, or non-implementation could also pose a huge threat to the achievement of social cohesion, especially where the communication is poor. Negative criticism because of unforgiveness in the sense of who is to blame for the prevailing status quo of matters could also threaten the realisation of social cohesion.

- **What would possibly indicate success in achieving social cohesion in a Higher Education Institution?**

According to Figueroa (2002:18) factors that would serve as key indicators in an endeavour like this study include: firstly, when there is improvement in skills necessary to perform new behaviours; secondly, ideational factors present such as knowledge, beliefs, values, perceived risk, subjective norms and even self-image; thirdly, emotional responses such as feelings of solidarity, empathy and confidence; fourthly, an increase in social support and influence from others as well as increased advocacy to others; fifthly, intention to engage in new behaviour in the future; and, lastly, specific behaviours related to the problem addressed by dialogue and collective action. Taken together, these outcomes determine the capacity for cooperative action in a community "to solve their own problems themselves" (Dagrón, 2009:453). It should, however, be noted that this is a learning process, which increases the community's overall capacity for future collective action, and increases its belief in, and value for, continual improvement. Furthermore, literature indicates that every time a community goes through the dialogue and collective action processes to achieve a set of shared objectives its potential to cooperate effectively in the future also increases. (Figueroa, 2002:19)

Furthermore, the study looked at a Theoretical Framework suitable to pursue a study of this nature after which it arrived at Bricolage as the best to use for this study. The different moments of Bricolage are discussed in relation to the study and its aim and objectives. The use of Bricolage as lens is justified because it deals with complexity within the diversity experienced within the study.

Literature was reviewed on the field of Communication as well as the field of Social Cohesion to show developments and to what extent research was done relating to the title of the study at hand. Communication was therefore discussed thoroughly bearing in mind its two legs namely Verbal Communication and Nonverbal Communication. In terms of Verbal Communication, its nature and types are discussed in relation to the title of the study. Secondly, Nonverbal Communication is discussed in terms of its nature and different classifications/types.

The field of Social Cohesion on the other hand was also discussed to shed light on what the study intended to achieve. Three pillars of Social Cohesion were further discussed, namely Social Inclusion, Social Mobility and Social Capital. Because Social Cohesion is a very broad field, which is often defined in terms of a particular context, the focus here was on higher education institutions. The Literature Review found that for Social Cohesion to happen, you must communicate properly and effectively exploring all relevant and possible avenues under both Verbal and Nonverbal Communication.

Regarding Research Design and Methodology for Strategy Formulation a Qualitative Method was used and Participatory Action Research was confirmed as best suitable qualitative method for this study. Focus Group Interviews were conducted to gather data relating to Verbal Communication. Secondly, Participant Observation was used to gather data for Nonverbal Communication with keen interest and focus upon the behaviour and movement of students, as target audience and co-researchers/participant researchers for this study. Processes and steps in gathering data preceded its Analysis and Discussion.

Analysis was done by using Critical discourse analysis was used to analyse Verbal Communication data gathered. The different codes/cues of Nonverbal Communication were used to guide and analyse nonverbal communication such as behaviour, touch, movement, artefacts, the environment, and all related aspects. Findings emanating from such analysis shed light upon the situation and as such provide guidelines leading towards a conclusion.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.2.1 General Recommendations

Based upon all Chapters and the ultimate Findings of the study, Heyneman, et al (2003:10) make general/overall recommendations for any Institution of Higher Education that wants to play a broader social role to foster Social Cohesion. It should be noted that these recommendations are also the solutions to the problems as alluded to earlier on. As such general recommendations are as follows:

1. Leadership should explain and defend the role of the Higher Education Institution.
2. They should be Public Debate on sensitive issues.
3. There should be Engagement with international scholarly communities.
4. It should have Curriculum that reflects social problems.
5. Empirical research should be done on social Issues.
6. It must have Students and faculty who are broadly representative of the wider population.
7. Linkages with the wider community should be built and strengthened.
8. Academic freedom must be the order of the day.
9. There should be Institutional autonomy to Publicly available standards of student and faculty conduct.
11. It must have a transparent process of adjudication for misconduct.
12. It should source multiple sources of finance aside from government.

7.2.2 Specific Recommendations

- The fact that the study concluded that indeed there is a need for Communication Strategy for Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution, the University of the Free State should revisit its Integrated Transformation Plan and rather create out of it a stand-alone Strategy to Foster Social Cohesion putting Communication at the centre of it.

I therefore recommend the following as:

A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO FOSTER SOCIAL COHESION IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

7.3 THE STRATEGY

7.3.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

Having looked at the University of the Free State's profile, I realised that the University does not have an actual Strategy for Social Cohesion, as alluded to earlier, but a mere plan, which they call the Integrated Transformation Plan. This compared to the scope of the problem and the vastness of the University as Institution of Higher Education is in my view a very much underrated attempt to do justice to the image of the University and what it is supposed to stand for. In order therefore to do justice I saw a huge need to craft a Communication Strategy to Foster Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution, and more specifically in the University of the Free State.

Having discussed a theoretical framework, reviewed literature, and did the necessary practical research to establish the gist of the matter, the findings thereof left me with no other choice than to design a Communication Strategy to Foster Social Cohesion in the University of the Free State as follows:

7.3.1.1 Focus Group Common Vision of the Future

Literature shows that once a community has passed through the previous stages it would be ready to plan where it wants to be in the future and how to get there (Figueroa, 2002), otherwise “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (NIV, Proverbs 29:18) Broad community participation will ensure that the “vision” is inclusive of all community members’ hopes and aspirations, in terms of **representation of community members and affected groups in defining the vision, as to how the student community has articulated its “dream”. No matter the amount and variety of cultures, races, religions, political parties, unions, and other formations exist in the institution, their agreement and common aim/vision to achieve for the future of the institution is to bring about social cohesion amongst its community members.**

7.3.1.2 Setting Objectives

Strategically spoken, no vision can be achieved unless objectives are set. My view is that these objectives are serving as beacons that guide me as catalysts together with the co-researchers the direction towards achieving the intended vision. Like steps of a ladder, objectives help you climb to your aim at the top. This answers the question on the ‘who’, the ‘what’, the ‘how’, when and the where and as such constitutes the plan/programme. A shared vision should allow the student community to list the goals/objectives it wants to achieve. The student community, together with the leaders and/or change agent, should evaluate how realistic the goals are and should try to set moderate goals to avoid a sense of failure. Figueroa, et al (2002:10) advise that goals that are challenging but feasible should be preferred and for the purpose of this study these include looking at challenges, solutions, conditions, threats, and indicators of success. **This participatory goal setting, in principle, would secure wide support and action, especially those goals set up by the University of the Free State community to deal with the problem, followed by a level of agreement of all.**

7.4 Priority Activities for Strategic Plan

7.4.1 Identification of Resources and Persons Responsible

The goal-setting stage should naturally give place to the actual planning process of what different kinds of actions can be taken to accomplish the objectives with which

everyone has agreed. This implies the identification of resources both inside and outside the student community, as well as persons or groups that can carry them out. Important here is the **mechanism used in identifying options for collective action; involvement of the affected groups in the identification of options, including both internal and external ones.**

7.4.2 Identification and Involvement of Leaders and Stakeholders

7.4.2.1 Leaders

The problem or issue to be addressed next should logically produce some kind of leadership structure. Therefore, special attention should be paid to ensure that the leadership structure does not reproduce an existing inequitable power structure in the University community. A fair representation of all groups affected should be in place and endorsed or approved by these groups. It should be noted that a mechanism that provides opportunities for active participation for leadership is more likely to convey social cohesion as it provides reinforcement and renewal of the existing leadership. **How groups and their interests in the issue were elected is important.**

7.4.2.2 Stakeholders

Participation of those who are most affected by the problem is a characteristic of social cohesion intervention. This involvement may be direct (work on the solution) or indirect (advocate or support for facilitating the solution or removing opposition). Effective and efficient measures should be put in place **to mobilise to get the appropriate stakeholder and beneficiaries involved in the program.**

7.5 Consensus on Action

Getting a consensus on action can also lead to conflict or a lack of commitment. At this stage the student community continues to seek resources and deals with conflict positively to advance the solution to their problem: Note should be taken as to whether any conflict has arisen in reaching consensus, how it is dealt with and resolved and what consensus is reached on the action plan. A document should be kept at hand to specify the action plan.

7.6 Assignment of Responsibilities

Specific people and groups should take responsibility for conducting each activity as defined in the action plan, with actual responsibilities assigned to participants as well as a level of agreement and representation, including new task groups sharing responsibility for implementing the plan.

7.7 Implementation

This step further refers to the actual execution of the action plan and its monitoring. Actions should be put in place for back-up activities so that the whole action plan does not get truncated if some activities do not work according to the original plan. This goes hand in hand with the above, namely, what, who, how, when, and where of the action plan. Failing which, reasons should be provided for **poor implementation, for example, resource constraint, decline in interest in the student community members assigned with the responsibility, etc and possible actions taken to cover for unsuccessful key activities.**

7.8 Time Frame

A specific timetable for when each activity needs to be accomplished will help the university's community to have clear deadlines for effectively moving toward the solution of the problem. This includes what, who, how, when, and where of the action plan, followed by the expected outcomes.

7.9 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

The achieved outcomes may or may not be what the student community originally planned in their goal setting. The comparison of the outcomes versus the original objectives is an important self-evaluation process. For purposes of group motivation and reward, it is important that most of the student community (especially the affected groups) participate in the evaluation process so that the lessons learned about what worked and why may be shared throughout the student community. The result of the participatory evaluation should be a new reassessment of the status of the student community with respect to the problem in terms of how the evaluation was conducted; who participated in the evaluation; **how the results are being disseminated to the broader university community; and what was learned from the process.**

7.10 Outcomes Indicators

This step refers to the actual results that the student community can achieve at the end of the process and who participated for such results to be achieved.

At last, to measure as to whether the University has achieved success in its attempts to foster Social Cohesion, in line with findings earlier alluded to me believe that a combination of Habermas' (1984) notion of Communicative Space and Action together with the implementation of the principles of Ubuntu (Tutu, 1999) will bring about social cohesion. Therefore, the University can only pride itself of achieving Social Cohesion through Communication when:

Its community exercises the following values:

- Communalism, Dignity, Respect, Value, acceptance, sharing, co-responsibility, humaneness, social justice, fairness, personhood, morality, group solidarity, compassion, joy, love, fulfilment, conciliation, etc. (Tutu, 1999; Mahlomaholo, 2013).

Its community exercises the following ethical principles:

- Reciprocity, common good, peaceful relations, emphasis on human dignity, and the value of human life as well as consensus, tolerance, and mutual respect. (Tutu, 1999; Mahlomaholo, 2013).

7.11 Further Recommendations

I would like to further recommend the study for:

- Further research in the field of Communication, for example with reference to matters relating to behavioural aspects.
- Further research in the field of Social Sciences, for example with reference to matters relating to culture and beliefs.
- Further research in the field of Political Sciences, for example with reference to matters relating to racism, discrimination, and peace.
- Further research in the field of Higher Education Studies.
- The strategy should be revisited from time to time as circumstances change from time to time.

7.12 CONCLUSION

The process of the university community dialogue and collective action must be measured to indicate whether social cohesion through communication has been achieved. According to Figueroa (2002:18) factors that would serve as key indicators in an endeavour like this study include: firstly, when there is improvement in skills necessary to perform new behaviours; secondly, ideational factors present such as knowledge, beliefs, values, perceived risk, subjective norms and even self-image; thirdly, emotional responses such as feelings of solidarity, empathy and confidence; fourthly, an increase in social support and influence from others as well as increased advocacy to others; fifthly, intention to engage in new behaviour in the future; and, lastly, specific behaviours related to the problem addressed by dialogue and collective action. Taken together, these outcomes determine the capacity for cooperative action in a community “to solve their own problems themselves” (Dagrón, 2009:453). It should, however, be noted that this is a learning process, which increases the community’s overall capacity for future collective action, and increases its belief in, and value for, continual improvement. Furthermore, literature indicates that every time a community goes through the dialogue and collective action processes to achieve a set of shared objectives its potential to cooperate effectively in the future also increases. (Figueroa, 2002:19)

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www.theguardian.com/education/oxforduniversity.ac.uk

APPENDIX A – ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401
9337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za
205 Nelson Mandela
Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

05-Nov-2020

Dear Mr Michael Smith

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

A Communication Strategy to Foster Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2020/0137/2010

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX B – PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE EDITING LETTER

27399 12th Avenue,
Vista Park
Bloemfontein

9323

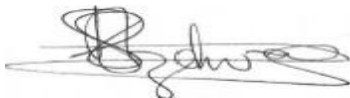
The Registrar,
University of the Free State
205 Nelson Mandela Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein
9301

12 December 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I; Siphwe Nzelwane, a freelance Language Practitioner, with a B. Tech degree in Language Practice, have edited the PhD thesis of M. Smith, a student at the University of the Free State, with student number 2001034434. The title of his thesis is “*A Communication Strategy to Foster Social Cohesion in a Higher Education Institution*”. I edited all the linguistic components of the thesis and advised the student of all the linguistic and structural errors identified and made recommendations for improvement.

Yours faithfully,



S. Nzelwane (Mr.)
LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER

Appendix C TURNITIN SIMILARITY REPORT

The screenshot displays the Turnitin Feedback Studio interface. The main document view shows the following text:

**A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
TO FOSTER SOCIAL COHESION IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The field of Communication is probably seen as the broadest in the lives of both human beings and nature in general and as essential as food is to make a living. I however, believe that different people perceive it differently depending on the purpose of its use. In an attempt to better understand it, various experts such as Tubbs and Moss, (2000:8) and Wood, (2012:10) have a common understanding that communication entails a "process of creating meaning between two or more people". To short more

At the bottom of the page, it says "Page: 1 of 196" and "Word Count: 57422".

On the right side, there is a "Match Overview" panel showing a similarity score of **6%**. Below this, there are two entries:

- 1 Submitted to University - Bucket Paper 6%
- 2 Submitted to University - Bucket Paper <1%

At the bottom right, there are options for "Text-Only Report" and "High Resolution" (which is currently turned on).