

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The first South African democratic general election of 1994 accelerated the eradication of South Africa's separate and unequal education system. The new era carried, among other promises, the transformation of South African education policies, to ensure that all South African children would have access to the school of their choice and that no child would be turned away from school on grounds of race, ethnicity, class and/or religion. An important social and political goal of the new government was to create greater unity among all citizens of South Africa and to enhance social cohesion among the different population groups in South Africa, a goal that Chipkin and Ngqulunga (2008) suggest may have been more successful from a political perspective, but not as successful when viewed from a social perspective.

Social cohesion refers to that which connects a society (Kearns & Forest, 2000) and is essentially concerned with the processes by which groups are able to negotiate a sense of belonging, shared values and identity. Chipkin and Ngqulunga (2008) suggest that social cohesion refers to a state where citizens of a country share feelings of solidarity with their compatriots. Murithi (2006) argues that social solidarity is an important component for peace and reflects the extent to which members of a society recognise each other as

fellow human beings and share a concern in the welfare and well-being of one another. Thus, social solidarity implies inter-connectedness (Murithi, 2006).

1.2 School desegregation in South Africa

There has been a score of reports (Vally & Dalamba, 1999) that indicates that racial tension in schools is still continuing despite nations alignment with yearning of being called a rainbow nation, that is one socially cohesive nation with different races, cultures, ethnicities seen entirely as one. Seeing that education can be one way of achieving social cohesion, it seems appropriate to examine the extent to which South African society are achieving our objectives by providing an education system that mirrors a socially cohesive society.

A brief history of Black/White desegregation since the birth of our democracy shows various incidences of racial tension that seems to suggest that social cohesion still remains more of a dream than a reality. For example, school desegregation involving the enrolment of Black learners in so-called White schools, has more often than not resulted in social antagonism and outright racial confrontations among the learners, some of which led to violence (Christie 1990a; Carrim, 1992; Vally & Dalamba, 1999; Machaisa, 2004; Meier, 2005, Phatlane, 2007). For example, Jordaan (2002), reported a case of racial tension between learners resulting in one stabbing another on the school premises. Over the years, such incidents in a number of schools around the country have been reported (see Police probing, 1997; Black-

White pupils, 1997; Monare, 1999; Racism, 1999; Probe, 2000; Race insults, 2000; Mboyane, 2000; Molakeng, 2001; and Davids, 2007), culminating in an incident involving the White students at the University of Free State video taping Black employees eating food from the bowl that they (White students) have urinated in, presumably as an indication of what will happen during their hostel's initiation should Black students be allowed to stay in their all White hostel.

Based on these and other accounts of racial tension between Black and White learners, one can conclude that social cohesion in South Africa merits further study.

1.3 Social cohesion

Social cohesion refers to a social concept, activities and nuances that connects a society in a quest to achieve shared meaning, being part of the entire group and having a sense of belonging with that group. According to Kearns and Forest (2000) social cohesion is essentially concerned with the processes by which groups are able to negotiate a sense of belonging, shared values and identity. Thus, I accept that individuals have a basic need to form authentic relationships with others because it is through relationships with others that a sense of belonging and identifying with others is developed or maintained. Menzies and Davidson (2002) state that it is in "[maintaining] the environment (where relationships develop), where it is possible to develop a

sense of being real through being known, leading to a greater ability to connect with other” (p. 54).

As noted by Green, Preston and Sabates (2003), social cohesion can assist in “the production of new focus for identity and engagement because the traditional forms of political engagement through political parties are in the decline in many countries as new and more diversified forms of identity politics and issue-based social movements are on the rise” (p. 454). However, the former is not so true in South Africa that has recently enjoyed its fourth democratic elections and the enthusiasm noticed during this elections resulting as well from the formation of new political parties saw an increase of nation participation, especially from the youth and their political affiliations and therefore defining and fulfilling social cohesion on a political level.

Social cohesion is a complex social phenomenon, as Friedkin (2004) notes when he suggests that social cohesion is “a multidimensional phenomenon or latent construct with multiple indicators” (p. 409). To illustrate the complexity of the construct, Green, Preston and Sabates (2003) indicate how education and family income inequality can give rise to new tensions and conflicts not only within an individual on a micro level (a need to belong) but also between individuals in groups (a need to form or be part of a group) on a macro level. According to Friedkin (2004) the individual level indicators of social cohesion include, “the desire to remain in a group, their identification with or loyalty to a group and individuals’ membership or participation or attachment to a group” (p. 410). In search for the need to belong, learners in the school form

friendships that they not only rely on but can also relate to. The need to have a sense of belonging can cross the racial line as learners' finds new and common ground that they can identify with.

Related to social cohesion, are the writings of authors such as Porteous (1976), Osterman (2000), Pierce, Kostova and Dirks (2002), Thaver (2004), and more recently, Marchetti-Mercer (2006) who all examine concepts such as 'belonging', 'commitment', 'security' and so forth to indicate what it means to feel 'at home' in a group. Green et al. (2003, p. 459) have also pointed out that social cohesion allows people to be more relaxed, trusting and more inclined to 'civic' cooperation. It is arguably important to know what makes learners feel a sense of belonging in a school if education is to achieve the goal of developing a socially cohesive society.

In South Africa, social cohesion through education finds expression in socio-political policies such as racial integration, equal education and Inclusive education strategies. Although inclusive education was initially focused on including learners with special needs, Graham and Slee (2008) argue that the term is expanding and is increasingly including all aspects of diversity. Thus, racial integration policies and inclusive education policies can be argued to share the same aspiration and goals for learners to develop a shared trust and identity through education.

1.4 Rationale and problem formulation

According to Nkomo and Vandeyar (2009) schools, by and large, “mirror society with all its accoutrements and ...are in a unique position to serve as cradles of social innovation to address the tensions and to contribute to greater social cohesion” (p12). Indeed, Green, Preston and Sabates (2003) have suggested that the promotion of social cohesion through education has re-emerged as an important objective for many countries in the past decade.

In South Africa, two important strategies for achieving social cohesion have been the policies that guide racial integration of the school system, and inclusive education with the objective of including disabled learners. In this study, I am particularly interested in examining social cohesion in terms of South Africa's racial integration policies and the extent to which learners of different races are able to negotiate a sense of belonging as one aspect of social cohesion. However, both racial integration and inclusive education policies share the same objectives, namely they aim to redress the education inequalities in that they both aspire to grant access to learners in education systems that in the past were somewhat exclusive either as a result of race or mainstream education policies. Inclusive education, as with integration indicates a “process (rather than a state) by which a school attempts to respond to all [learners] as individuals [and also] emphasizes the reconstructing of curricular provision in order to reach out to all [learners]” (Vislie, 2003, p. 21).

Furthermore, integration is assumed to foster social cohesion because it promotes the idea that all learners becomes apart of the school system. Green et al. (2003) refer to a socially cohesive school environment as one where there is “shared norms and values; a sense of shared identity or belonging to a common community” (p. 455). The findings of this study are therefore expected to be of interest to inclusive educationists, educational psychologists and policymakers in terms of understanding how a sense of belonging contributes to social cohesion within the context of racial integration and inclusive education.

While it is important to acknowledge the fact that Black and White school desegregation has been marred by racial conflicts and that much still need to be understood about the factors required to enhance social cohesion in Black/White racial integration, one has to also acknowledge that desegregation of Black and Indian schools offer evidence to the contrary. Thus, the difficulties noted in the Black/White school desegregation do not seem to plague the Black/Indian school desegregation, possibly because of the shared value and identity resulting from their political history and less pressure to conform to white ideals or what Carter (2006) refers to as the “resistance to acting-white thesis...that is a form of collective resistance [where learners] reject behaviours that are considered to be the province of the dominant White middle class” (p2).

Black/Indian school desegregation is reported (Carrim 1998) to have been taking place for the past two decades as a result of the political relationship

between the two races. Thus, it became a historical practice before 1994 that Blacks and Indians could attend the same school. Thus, it is possible that Black and Indian learners, because of their political history, have developed an “intra-black” identity that allowed greater social cohesion through shared values and political ideals, and the development of a superordinate identity grounded in the political struggle for freedom. Therefore, social cohesion took place harmoniously in such settings because according to Chipkin and Nqculunga (2008) Social “cohesion refers to a situation where citizens of the state share feelings of solidarity with their compatriots, and act on the basis of these feelings” (p. 61). Thus, due to the political relationship between Blacks and Indians in South Africa and the fact that Indian schools enrolled Black learners since the 1980s social cohesion and learners sense of belonging in such schools are already well established as both races identify with each other for instance as both being disadvantaged by the apartheid regime.

The social and political dynamics that guided desegregation of Indian and Black schools were arguably quite different to the dynamics that guided the desegregation of Black and White schools. Against this background, it can be assumed that the history of collaboration between Blacks and Indians may have created different desegregation dynamics because the two racial groups were never in such stark conflict with each other as compared to the historical conflicts between Blacks and Whites. Thus, it is possible that social cohesion has been more successfully achieved in Black/ Indian school desegregation and that this process has now moved to social integration where learners are able to relate and form authentic relationships with each other.

Therefore, desegregated Indian schools have been accommodating both Black and Indian learners for more than a decade and this may offer a valuable site for studying social cohesion among learners who belong to different racial groups, but who have somehow managed to forge a shared identity and sense of belonging that contributes to less racial tensions, incidents of violence and more behaviours associated with social cohesion.

1.5 Aim of the study

In this study I aim to understand the extent to which Black and Indian learners in a former desegregated House of Delegates school negotiate a sense of belonging. More critically, as Carter (2006) frames it, is how racial identity and concomitant cultural behaviours matter to educational outcomes. Thus, in this study I will examine social cohesion in a Black/Indian desegregated school environment by focusing on learners' sense of belonging in the school that has become racially and culturally diverse. Belonging is viewed as one dimension of social cohesion that brings and allow individuals to feel part of and identify with the group and contributing to the shared values and aspirations underpinned by need for affirmation, friendships and need to be part of the group (Menzies & Davidson, 2002; Green et al., 2003; and Friedkin, 2004).

The findings of this study will contribute to the growing literature on social cohesion in South Africa, which some scholars argue is still very scant (Chipkin & Ngqulunga, 2008). This study will also make a contribution to the

body of literature on school and racial integration by adding a social psychological perspective to the educational policy studies that have mostly been conducted in this field.

This study is important because it will add to understanding about the factors that promote social cohesion in South Africa. Social cohesion is arguably one of the most important social goals that South Africa is striving toward. As noted by Menzies and Davidson (2002) studies on a sense of belonging and how to achieve such belonging is a significant factor that impacts on the mental health of the learners and ultimately, academic achievement. Friedkin (2004) also emphasises the importance of positive interpersonal interactions being at the foundation of social processes. The extent to which learners are able to express their identities authentically also has long term implications for their academic commitment (Human-Vogel, 2008).

Thus, educational psychologists should be able to use the findings of this study to better understand and respond to racial tensions among learners from diverse backgrounds by focusing on how to develop a sense of belonging and authentic expression of their identities that is so important for forming commitments and academic achievement.

1.6 Research question

How do Grade 11 learners negotiate a sense of belonging in a desegregated former House of Delegates school?

Subquestions

1. How do Grade 11 learners conceptualise belonging in a desegregated former HoD school?
2. How do Grade 11 learners' sense of belonging contributes to social cohesion in the desegregated former HoD school?

1.7 Research design

1.7.1 Case study

In this study I seek to “understand a specific unit of human activity embedded in the real world; which can only be studied or understood in context;...so that precise boundaries are difficult to [replicate]” (Gillham, 2001, p. 1). As noted by Yin (2003), a case study is “an enquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p.13). Thus, the research setting can be studied in its natural state. Thus research was conducted during school time and only on the school premises to give me an opportunity to collect more data about the school through observations.

Gay (1996) describes a case study as “the in-depth investigation of one ‘unit’, for example, a school, a classroom, a programme, and individual or a group” (p. 61). The focus of my study is in this ‘one unit’, the school, I engaged the participants in what Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) refer to as “the study of an instance in action” (p. 181) or what Denzin and Lincoln (2003) describe as “specific of a particular” (p. 10) school environment so that the everyday challenges and rewards could be observed in relation to the phenomenon being studied.

I investigated and sought to understand the interactions of the learners in their real life environment, the school. McBurney (2001) mentions that “many case studies result from problems that present themselves to researchers as opportunities that must be grasped quickly during the data collection or [be] lost” (p. 223). Learners’ day-to-day encounters were important in my study as they provided defining moments of what sense of belonging meant to them as individuals and as a group.

1.7.2 Research site

The school selected for the study remained racially diverse unlike some desegregated schools that rapidly became mono-racial (Vally & Dalamba, 1999; Phatlane, 2007; Nkomo & Vandeyar, 2008). The school employs both Black and Indian teachers unlike other desegregated schools where staff demographics do not change with learner demographics (Vally & Dalamba, 1999). It is reasonable to assume that feelings of belonging can be achieved

and be better explained when learners have the teachers whom they can racially and culturally identify with as role models and not subconsciously see authority as vested only in people of ‘another’ race. Therefore, Gandhi Secondary was selected because there are both Black and Indian teachers, which means learners can find someone in authority that they may be able to identify with, for instance in terms of culture and traditional practices.

1.7.3 Participants

In her study, Dolby (2001) indicated that socio-economic status of the learners has an impact on their socialisation in the school and therefore their sense of belonging. Therefore, it was important that the study incorporated learners (despite their race) from different socio-economic backgrounds. Participants in the study comprised learners (both Black and Indians) who walked to school because they resided in the Indian township where the school is located, those who resided in the surrounding suburbs and those who resided in the surrounding Black townships including squatter camps, and were transported to school by minibus taxis and/ or dropped off.

1.7.4 Data collection and analysis

Data was collected by means of Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). IQA is a “social constructionist approach to data collection and analysis which addresses power relations between the researcher and participants by encouraging greater participation of the

participants” (Zimmerman, 2006, p. 20). Thus, IQA gives greater scope for participants to direct the research process. IQA was regarded as a suitable methodology because it gives the researcher the opportunity of collecting data while the participants are engaged in the analysis. Participation is encouraged and achieved firstly through elicitation of themes (affinities) through what IQA refers to as axial coding that is by giving relevant experiential examples, and through the creation of theory in relation to the influences around the created affinities. Secondly, data analysis is undertaken by using an Affinity Relationship Table (ART) so that participants can record their views, by voting for the possible relationship amongst the affinities. Thus, with IQA, participants are involved in the making up, analysis and the final product of the research process.

The end result of the IQA process is a visual representation of the relationships amongst the affinities called the Systemic Interrelationship Diagram (SID) (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The SID indicates a research process that was done rigorously and can be replicated by other researchers using IQA rules when investigating similar or the same phenomena. “The purpose [of IQA] is to achieve complexity, simplicity, comprehensiveness, and interpretability” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 41). My study not only creates such a visual representation of school community in a former HoD school, but validates the visual representations with additional data sources such as observations and in-depth interviews. A more detailed exposition of IQA will be described in Chapter three.

1.8 Limitations

I fully acknowledge that the choice of my methodology gives way to research bias. I chose to use a research methodology called Interactive Qualitative Analysis (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) which attempts to limit my subjectivity in the collection of my data and to some extent in my data analysis by giving more scope to the participants. IQA further claims that my research can be replicable, which raises questions in qualitative research methodology however, this is to indicate level of objectivity in research using IQA. As a researcher I continually reflected on my possible biases and checked where I could have possibly distorted my understanding. This was discussed with both my supervisor and co-supervisor in our meetings.

Case study research is not for generalisation, it is an in-depth study of a particular case. Therefore, the scope of this research was limited to a particular school with its own culture. Therefore application of this study is confined to a particular case study in a particular context. Furthermore, as the focus of my study is on the learners, this means that I will not reflect the views of the teachers and other stakeholders on this issue in the school where the research was conducted.

As a Black researcher conducting a study around race and who underwent the school system that was inferior to my White counterparts, I am aware that it is difficult to detach myself from the issues and emotions evoked during

investigations, and that such influences might inadvertently be reflected in my arguments.

Furthermore, I am aware that being Black, I might create a sense of comfort for a Black learner in the interview situation which an Indian learner might not have felt. As a result, it is possible that Indian learners might have been less forthcoming with their points of view.

I am a Black man, writing about feelings of 'belonging' and 'at home'. I might not be fully sensitive to the nuanced reasoning that some female respondents might have employed. It is possible that unconscious prejudice might have led me to expect more affective responses from females and more practical response from males. In addition, it is possible that a 16 or 17 year Indian girl, strictly brought up within the parameters of the Islamic religion, might have responded reticently to the fact that the researcher was a Black man.

As a trained psychologist, I am conscious of participants' emotions and attempted to be sufficiently attuned to my participants should they become upset by their engagement with each other and the research question. I made an agreement with an authority figure (a teacher that the learners already trust) that I asked for assistance should the need arise. I kept close contact at the school with male and female teachers who were willing to assist me, should I encounter such challenges.

1.9 Central concepts in the study

The following concepts were important for this study. They will be elaborated upon in the literature review and the theoretical framework of this study.

1.9.1 Social cohesion

Social cohesion refers to individuals feeling a sense of belonging to a particular group with common goals and objectives as well as moral codes of behaviour (Friedkin, 2004). Socially cohesive groups have a general absence of conflict in the group, the members readily acknowledge their social obligations and are willing to assist one another. The group is characterised by a high degree of social interaction and there are strong attachments to place and identity (Forest & Kearns, 2001) that facilitates a sense of security and belonging, and creates a symbolic bond to people who are close to us (Kearns & Forest, 2000).

1.9.2 Integration

Integration is defined by Dash (1988) as affirmative efforts that facilitate the elimination of racial and ethnic differences and at the same time provide a multi-ethnic atmosphere and the mechanisms to encourage mutual respect, understanding, and acceptance. Phatlane (2007) considers integration to mean the bringing of people of different racial or ethnic groups into unrestricted and equal association in society or in an organisation. This

unrestricted and equal association are the key elements underlying this study in order to understand and experience integration in the school environment. Vally and Dalamba (1999) stress that integration “is essentially concerned with the interactions and relationships between learners, teachers, content and context” (p. 22), and not merely whether various races are represented in the classroom. In this study the emphasis of integration is on that which happens after the formal act of desegregation has taken place. It is concerned with the practices in the classroom and wider school environment when learners of different races share desks, playground, amenities and equipment.

1.9.3 Belonging

The concept of belonging is an important element of the concept of social cohesion, integration and inclusion. It indicates the feelings of being part and a member of a particular group or community. According to Menzies and Davidson (2002) feelings of belonging are linked to feelings of authenticity (ability to express one’s own true self) and being able to connect with others. Thus a sense of belonging assures an individual of ownership and relatedness to other learners and the school’s practices. Thus, Kostova and Dirks (2002) link the feeling of being ‘at home’ with “the state of psychological ownership” (p. 6) and therefore ascertaining belongingness in the individual significant space or environment. Furthermore, according to Marchetti-Mercer (2006), belonging implies a bilateral process, because “it implies both that [learner] should be able to identify with a certain type of [school] community and that [the school] should be able to see and construct itself as a container for individual belonging” (p. 208).

In order to belong and feel 'at home' learners in the school need to relate to the practices, cultures and groupings in the school. This need for relatedness, according to Osterman (2000), "involves the need to feel securely connected with the 'other' [learners] in the environment and to experience oneself as worthy of love and respect" (p. 325).

1.9.4 Racial descriptions in this study

I am keeping the racial¹ identifiers of the past, that is that of Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites because they have historical significance and I am looking at a school that historically desegregated among Black and Indian learners and now seeking to integrate Black and Indian learners.

1.10 Chapter planning

Chapter 2 discusses the literature on racial integration, sense of belonging and draws on social cohesion as the conceptual framework for this study.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology and Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA).

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis, results and discussion of the study.

Chapter 5 considers conclusion, implication, contribution and limitations.

¹ I acknowledge that these terms are not used unproblematically and that there are emotions attached to racial identifiers.

CHAPTER TWO

RACIAL INTEGRATION AND SENSE OF BELONGING

2.1 Introduction

Racial integration espoused that sharing of same space such as in a school format by diverse racial groups can happen harmoniously with no or at least less serious problems. The different races in this space can relate, share common goals and have an ownership of this common space. Thus having a sense of belonging, as they feel as part and members of the integrated group that fosters the development of social cohesion both on the individual and group level. Different authors (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990 and Friedkin, 2004) mention that there is no definite definition of social cohesion. Bollen and Hoyle (1990) refer to a “perceived social cohesion” as an important construct of social cohesion (p. 482). According to Friedkin (2004) social cohesion is seen as a “multidimensional phenomenon with multiple indicators [vested] on an individual and group level” (p. 410). Thus, in social cohesion, a sense of belonging is seen as a factor that crosses between the two levels and how “sense of belonging of an individual to a particular group and his/her feelings of morale associated with the membership in that group” Bollen & Hoyle, 1990, p. 482).

As a result of the historical-political context in South Africa it is important to consider these two construct (racial integration and sense of belonging) as they both on an individual and group level contribute towards social cohesion.

2.2 Racial integration in South African schools

2.2.1 Historical-political context

In South Africa, the election of the “National Party in the 1948...ushered in the formal policy of apartheid, also known...as ‘separate development” (Louw & Foster, 2004, p. 181). The South African apartheid regime subsequently introduced various legislations that did not only separate different races but also privileged the White race over other races. These legislations include the Group Areas Act, 1957; the Bantu Education Act, 953 and the Job Reservation Act, 1956. Even as early as in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century ‘race’ was used predominantly to explain the structure of the South African population (Louw & Foster, 2004, p, 172).

The objective of apartheid education was to fit Black people into subordinate positions in the racially-structured divisions of labour and aimed to reproduce this structure, according to Vally and Dalamba (1999: 9) the results of which are still being experienced today in the social and economic status of the Blacks and Indians. Durrheim and Dixon (2005) show in their study how racism persists through systematic practices in everyday settings, such as the continued practices of racial division on beaches in South Africa in what Green, Sonn and Matsebula (2007: 396) refer to as economic apartheid, where White affluence has replaced segregationist laws as a new mode of segregation and expression of whiteness. The apartheid South African government introduced various policies and enacted various legislations such

job reservation through the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 where certain jobs were reserved for Whites only; as well as other legislatures to ensure White supremacy included Bantu Education Act of 1953; Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959; and Bantu Homelands citizenship Act of 1970.

The first democratic general elections of 1994 brought with it the new era that carried, among other promises, the transformation of South African policies, to ensure that all South African children would have access to the school of their choice and that no child would be turned away from school on grounds of race, ethnicity, class and/or religion. One of the mechanisms to ensure access was through school desegregation. Desegregation was about beginning to foster unity among South Africans, thus implicitly to improve social cohesion of our society.

2.2.2 Desegregation of education - a brief overview

A great deal of research on the desegregation of education has been conducted in South Africa and it is possible to divide the body of literature into distinct phases that reflect different conceptualisations of what desegregation means in a South African context.

According to Zafar (1999) the “first wave of school desegregation research in South Africa emerged from historically White and liberal universities in the late 1980s” (p. 2). It was grounded in a multicultural discourse and explored desegregation with respect only to White private and state schools. She cites

the studies by Bot and Schlemmer (1986, 1989), Bot (1987), Christie (1990a), Metcalfe (1991), and Morrell (1991) that focused on White English-speaking schools enrolling non-White learners. The second wave of desegregation research includes studies by Carrim (1992, 1995, & 1998), Naidoo (1996), Soudien (1998a), and Zafar (1998) at former HoD and HoR schools, where learners of other races had been registered in Coloured and Indian schools despite the apartheid legislation in force at the time.

In the third wave, post 1998, the focus was more on school integration studies that focused on new realities that the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act, 1996, promulgated, children are to attend school on an equal footing and their 'rights' as learners are more entrenched. Studies cover learner relations and identities in terms of parental economic status and social class or learners' socio-health status (especially in HIV/AIDS-affected families). Studies by Soudien (1998a & b), Jansen (1998, 2004), Dolby (2001), Nkomo, Chisholm and McKinney (2004), Soudien, Carrim and Sayed (1992), Soudien and Sayed (2004), Hemson (2006), Tihanyi (2006) and Møller (2006) covered some of the dynamics that the teachers have to grapple with in the classroom after 1994.

2.2.3 Desegregation, integration and social cohesion

The third wave of school desegregation research focuses increasingly on "intra-black dynamics" (Zafar, 1999). As Dolby (2001) have suggested, the discourse on school desegregation and integration have moved beyond a

problematization of racial issues to include discourses in psychology on social cohesiveness, and perhaps more tangible aspects of life that some of the learners choose to identify themselves with, like their 'hanging out' preferences. Increasingly, the past is not an organising principle for them, since most of them indeed started school in the democratic dispensation where they probably were treated 'fairly' and 'equally' by the school system.

Generally, 'desegregation' refers to the reassignment of learners and staff by race or ethnic identity. The primary aim of desegregation is to "correct racial imbalance, particularly in previously advantaged schools where the majority of learners were White" (Fife, 1997, p. 39; Ranchod, 1997, p. viii). Desegregation primarily "refers to physical proximity in relation to race or colour" (Vally & Dalamba, 1999, p. 22). Thus, definitions of desegregation generally focus on the movement of members of one race to a previously mono-racial environment. In the context of South Africa, more often than not, it is migration from Black townships to the more advantaged and affluent White surrounding environments.

By contrast, 'integration' is defined as "affirmative efforts that facilitate the elimination of racial and ethnic differences and at the same time provide a multi-ethnic atmosphere and the mechanisms to encourage mutual respect, understanding, and acceptance" (Dash, 1988). Because integration is essentially concerned with "the interactions and relationships between learners, teachers, content and context" (Vally & Dalamba, 1999, p. 22), the goals of racial integration (as opposed to desegregation) is strongly aligned

with the individual behaviours and group characteristics associated with socially cohesive groups along the dimension of civic culture and common values. Put differently, the objectives of racial integration promotes a society in which members share a common set of values and behaviours through which to conduct their relations with one another (Forest & Kearns, 2000).

Thus, where desegregation focuses on 'how many in the classroom', racial integration focuses on 'what is happening in the classroom'. To illustrate this point, Carter (2006) says that "placing diverse bodies next to each other would not heighten...academic achievement for the descendants of those once excluded from the more resourceful [as this] would not occur by some process of social osmosis" (p. 2). Thus, racial integration implies that learners of "different ethnicities, religions, races or cultures are encouraged to interact" (Dash, 1988, p. 40) on an equal and mutually respectful footing. In this context, integration can be linked to what Carter (2006) in her study refers to as socio-cultural context. She focuses on what happens in the school and the classroom when learners from diverse backgrounds come together, and how issues such as language policy, learner hairstyles, learner attitudes towards other races (both learners and teachers), gender relations, achievement expectations and access to school can impact on one's sense of belonging.

It is therefore, important in this study to note that desegregation and racial integration reflect distinct differences in the approach to the redress of past inequalities. I examine the evidence from a racial integration perspective, as I assume that in social cohesion, sense of belonging occur as a result of a

blend of relationships, friendships and interactions between learners, teachers and the school environment. The concept of 'integration' is also strikingly connected to the construct of 'at home' as looked at in this study. Being 'at home' in an environment such as a desegregated school means being in a place, as succinctly put by Marchetti-Mercer (2006), "where people from diverse backgrounds, with different ideas and beliefs can work together in an atmosphere that is enabling and which allows for respectful co-existence and collaboration" (p. 14). Thus, 'at home' fulfils a sense of belonging that learners strive for in a diverse or any other school environment.

Therefore, integration, unlike desegregation which is concerned with racial composition, Integration, in a quest for social cohesion, is interested in the 'what' and the depth of the relationships, working together and the sharing that takes place when learners from different races get together in the same classroom, playground and other school settings.

2.2.4 Integration and Inclusion

Integration is not only about the occupation of the same space by different races and being content with the fact that different races occupy the same space. It is however, interested in the relationships and the interaction between the different races in terms of the way that they relate to one another and share the common space so as the all have a sense of belonging in that space. Such are also the objectives of inclusion. For example, Graham and Slee (2008) note that shifting "students around the educational chessboard is

not in or of itself inclusive” (p. 278). Inclusion is concerned with bring together learners in a school context from all races together in a learning environment despite their abilities or disabilities. It is interested in the support that learners with various needs should receive and espouses to treat all learners equal. However, Graham and Slee (2008) warn of a dangerous assumption that results on the surface that assumes a benign commonality of the two terms.

Racial integration is the process of ensuring that there are positive and rewarding interactions among learners from diverse backgrounds in the school environment. This implies that all learners should experience their learning environment as a space in which they can feel free to express their identity fully and authentically. Thus, according to Menzies and Davidson (2002) through the experiencing authenticity, that is being true to self and having a sense of belonging in one’s space, an individual is more likely to develop positive self concept as they see their differences not as a problem but an enhancement in their learning environment. Therefore, it is important for the psychological well-being of the learners to be able to identify with school the practices and in turn for the school to accommodate learner’s culture so as to promote learner authenticity and true self identity.

Inclusion in South African context is also concerned with ensuring that all learners irrespective of their abilities or challenges (with more emphasis on learners with barriers to learning and participation) are equally catered for in the mainstream education. Thus, Vislie (2003) points out that integration and inclusion in education have many similar goals, the most important being a

platform for advocating the rights of marginalized groups in the education system. Thus the two constructs are “frequently mixed, mostly considered as overlapping and without due recognition of the different cores of the two terms” (Vislie, 2003 p. 17). In this study, the recognition of the difference in the cores of the terms is acknowledged as integration is noted in terms of diversity (for instance race, culture, gender, religion) while inclusion is noted in terms of special education as advocated by White paper 6. However, both these constructs, although operating from different discourses, seek as their goal the enhancement of social cohesion.

2.3 Social Cohesion

2.3.1 Introduction

Social cohesion as a social construct has received varied attention by researchers in an attempt to locate it in different disciplines and its definition, conceptualisation and measurement is still an open debate (Friedkin, 2004; & Chan, To & Chan, 2006). According to Friedkin (2004) “the main source of confusion is a proliferation of definitions of social cohesion that have proved difficult to combine or reconcile” (p. 409). In agreement Chan, To and Chan (2006) concludes that the term social cohesion has been “conceptualised in literature: in many cases, definitions are too loosely made, with a common confusion between content and the cause or effects of social cohesion” (p. 273).

According to Kearns and Forest (2000) social cohesion refers to that which connects a society and is essentially concerned with the processes by which groups are able to negotiate a sense of belonging, shared values and identity. It refers to a state where individuals and group members are able to relate to one another in a quest to finding themselves and having an authentic connection with each other.

2.3.2 Identity, belonging and mental health

2.3.2.1 Social constructions of race

When considering racial integration, one must inevitably reflect on the role of racial identity in relation to belonging and mental health. In far-reaching extent, racial identity, thinking and the other aspects that are associated with it, play a major role in the schools and therefore having an impact on learners' sense of belonging. It is well-acknowledged in the literature that significant positive associations are reported between racial identity and personal and social adjustment outcomes such as self-esteem, self-image and academic achievement (Burrow, Tubman & Montgomery, 2006).

'Race', linked to skin colour, has been used through time to separate people and to show preference towards some or to 'other' in terms of power and privilege and therefore benefit some over the other. Mills (2003) explains 'race' as the "stable reference point for identifying the 'them' and 'us' which

override all other ‘thems’ and ‘us’s’...’Race’ is seen as what ties the system together, and blocks progressive change” (p. 157).

Roediger (1999) views ‘race’ as a social, historical and ideological construction, and Green, Sonn and Matsebula (2007) agree that ‘race’ is determined not so much by common sense and biological explanations, but understood as a socially constructed phenomenon, subjected to multitudes of influences such as context, gender, history, class, region and political philosophy. Thus, ‘race’ is understood not just in terms of skin colour, but also by privileges, opportunities and power. In South Africa, White people enjoyed such status during the apartheid regime and the greater funding of White schools more than ‘other’ ‘races’ was one such privilege. Although to a lesser extent, Indians in South Africa also enjoyed more privileges, position and status as compared to Blacks (Tihanyi, 2006). The Indian schools were for instance, better funded than Black schools, Indians in South African history could form part of Tricameral parliamentary system where-else Blacks were not allowed such privileges. According to Vally and Dalamba (1999) “the results of the apartheid era discriminatory laws are still being experienced today in the social and economic status of the Blacks and Indians” (p. 9). Thus, to foster social cohesion, school desegregation was implemented as a government policy and there after paved way for other social cohesive phenomena such as integration and inclusion.

Race can be constructed through concepts such as ‘whiteness’. Researchers such as Green, Sonn and Matsebula (2007) explain ‘whiteness’ in terms of

position, power, status and privilege and in terms of skin colour. The promotion and reinforcement of 'whiteness' ideologies during apartheid continues to shape social relations and what constitutes 'race' in South Africa. The study by Green, Sonn and Matsebula (2007) addresses the way 'whiteness' is reproduced and maintained through knowledge construction, national identity and sense of belonging, thus affecting the direction and the pace of social cohesion. Wander, Martin and Nakayama (1999) state that these practices and mechanisms determine how people act and interact and how White people and established institutions privilege, and continue to dominate. Thus Green, Sonn and Matsebula (2007) view 'whiteness' and not race as a form of hegemony. Admission requirements of institutions tend to discriminate along the lines of being able to afford access and are not explicitly about race.

Race can also be viewed through the lens of critical race theory (CRT) with the focus is placed on the social and economic issues surrounding a particular race which therefore, defines what race is in that community. The starting point of CRT is "a focus on racism; in particular, its central importance in society and its routine (often unrecognised) character" (Gillborn, 2008, p. 27). In social cohesion, the need for positive affirmation and a sense of belonging might lead the learners to identify with the race that the community regards as privilege, thus, in schools learners wants to be part of the "in group" as it is regarded with status. As yearning for belonging, individual seeks to identify him/herself with power. Landson-Billings and Donnor (2008) argue that as a result of possessing power, an individual can move from "conceptually Black"

to a “conceptually White” (p. 372) racial status. Thus friendships and membership formations are affected as learners in the school situation conceptually construct their desired identity. This desired identity, can result in an individual being accepted by the in-group or lead into the membership (soccer, debate, cricket team or any other social teams) that is admired within the school environment.

In my study, the Indian school, as a result of the privileges and the resources they enjoyed under the Tricameral Parliament, occupied a “conceptually White” status vis a vis Black schools. Thus, the migration of Black learners to Indian schools. However, compared to White schools, Indian schools occupied a ‘conceptually Black’ status. Thus, further opening up a question as to whether there is evidence, of White learners migrating to Indian or Black schools in South Africa.

2.3.2.2 Racial identity, belonging and mental health

Most of the desegregated school in South Africa still maintain the cultural ethos that racially identify with the race of the initial “owners” of the schools. Thus, in such schools, positive affirmation is reinforced from one side with the new comers having to assimilate in the dominant culture that in most cases do not affirm their own identities. According to Tihanyi (2006) inherent in assimilation was the value of judgement that put the ingroup above the outgroup” (p. 54), thus, social cohesion opportunities such as friendships and interactions in such settings are frequently disrupted (as noted in the

Black/White school desegregation) as learners either conform in order to be accepted or stand out at the risk of being labelled troublemakers and therefore affecting their social status of being part or outside the group.

The importance of the construct and its relevance to the mental health of individuals is further emphasised by Menzies and Davidson (2002) when they assert that feelings of “inauthenticity, or confusion of identity often goes hand-in-hand with feelings of alienation from the rest of [the group], a sense of not belonging, accompanied by hopelessness, futility and despair” (p. 44). Martin and Mohanty (1986) refer to “repression within oneself” (p. 196), which raises challenges in relation to sense of belonging and self-identity unable to express who they are (identity). The psychological effect of this situation can affect learners’ sense of belonging because it is known that poor self-concept and low confidence (Hartup, 2001; Bergevin, Bukowski & Miners, 2003) is associated with poor academic performance.

Furthermore, as a result of not being able to identify and develop a sense of belonging within their school, learners find themselves having to ‘fit in’, that is to be what Carter (2005) refers to as “cultural mainstreamers” (Samkian, 2006, p. 2). Thus assimilating, or struggling to retain their cultural identity at the risk of being stigmatised as an outsider. Steele and Aronson (1995) refer to stereotype threat, and define it as “a social-psychological predicament that can arise from widely known negative stereotype about one’s group” (p. 797). Thus Christie (1990b) reports, the “Black children who attend predominantly

white schools straddle two worlds but belong to neither” (p. 57-59). They risk being seen as the ‘other’ and not so much as one of ‘us’.

Ferrante (2003) argues “the basis for ‘othering’ stems from the culture [which] is usually the standard that people use to make judgements about the material and non-material cultures of another society” (p.87). Therefore, new learners learn that for them to be seen as part of the group (“the us”) they must behave as expected by the new environment and therefore, play the role of Carter’s (2005) “Noncompliant believers’ [who] on the other hand do not act in accordance with the dominant values and norms even though they often subscribe to the functional aspects of a good education” (Samkian, 2006, p. 2). Yet, a sense of belonging and having ownership in a school should entail having to practice where possible their traditions, cultures and practices as far as possible as long as they do not infringe on others. More importantly when this happens, and they do not lose their traditions, they will therefore, realise the actual benefit of integration.

Therefore, these learners will become what:

“Carter (2005) refer to as ‘cultural straddlers’ [who] can strategically and effectively move across the different cultural spheres, enabling themselves to achieve academically by playing the game, all the while maintaining their sense of racial or ethnic identity”

(Samkian, 2006, p 2).

The findings of various studies (Christie 1990a; Carrim, 1992; Vally & Dalamba, 1999; Machaisa, 2004; Meier, 2005, Phatlane, 2007) conducted in South Africa on school desegregation and integration are instructive to the extent that they highlight the particular psychological challenges that learners face in relation to social cohesion in South Africa. Christie (1990b) and Carter (2006) refer to the extent to which learners have to learn to succeed in “straddling” two cultural worlds in their search for a sense of belonging, yet belonging to neither (Christie, 1990b).

At the same time Soudien (2004) cautions us that despite good intentions to create schools that make all learners feel a sense of belonging, it is in reality very challenging for schools, teachers and authorities to cater for diverse learners, so that what happens more frequently, is what Naidoo (1996) reports:

In most cases schools did very little on an organised or formal basis to address the changes brought about by integration. There was generally an attitude of ‘business as usual’. ...Most innovations have been introduced sporadically rather than continuously, through outside pressure rather than generated from within, for expediency rather than from a sense of conviction. They were often introduced much later than desirable, superficially rather than at a fundamental level and for the benefit of certain individuals rather than to improve the educational performance of all (p. 79).

Thus, a sense of belonging and its contribution to social cohesion is an important area of intervention for educational psychologists in South Africa. The need for psychologists to be culturally competent and to be able to work with a diversity of clients is well acknowledged in the helping professions (Bhui & Morgan, 2007). In addition, Kagee and Price (1994) have argued that counselling and psychotherapy, particularly in South Africa, must move beyond a consideration of intrapsychic to include political, social and economic variables is especially instructive. Thus, educational psychologists should become sensitive to the social, political and cultural mosaic that learners bring with them into the schools environment and address the extent to which constructions of race can serve to privilege or disadvantage learners in terms of identity expression, psychological adjustment and academic achievement. As suggested by Kagee and Price (1994), psychologists should extend “beyond helping [learners] merely to cope with their environment, to [social cohesion responsibilities] in assisting them in effecting its transformation” (p. 97).

2.3.3 Approaches to the study of social cohesion

There is no clear agreement in the literature on definitions and measurement of social cohesion (Kearns & Forest, 2000; Friedkin, 2004; Chan, To & Chan, 2006).

Chan, To and Chan (2006) also laments the vague conceptualisation of social cohesion that complicates its measurement and attempts increased clarity by

distinguishing between academic and policy discourses. With reference to the general conceptualisation of the concept, Chan et al. (2006) points out that social cohesion is sometimes narrowly viewed as the equivalent of solidarity and trust, others associate the term with inclusion, social capital and poverty. Thus, Chan et al.'s (2006) basic concern is that the construct of social cohesion is not well developed "to enable its measurement, and that many studies of social cohesion focus on systemic variables only so that individual measurement of the topic is problematic" (p. 275).

Bollen and Hoyle (1990) have argued that studies of social cohesion neglect individual group members' perceptions of their cohesion to the group, a problem which Friedkin (2004) acknowledges causes difficulty when trying to reconcile individual and group perspectives of social cohesion. To overcome this problem, Bollen and Hoyle (1990) proposed the study of perceived cohesion, which focuses on individuals' perception of their cohesion to the group along two dimensions, namely sense of belonging and feelings of morale. More formally, perceived cohesion is thus defined as "an individual's sense of belonging to a particular group and his or her feelings of morale associated with membership in the group" (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990, p. 482). Thus, they argue for a more subjective approach to the study of cohesion that accommodates the study of factors related to the individual in the group.

More recently, Friedkin (2004, p. 410) states that a comprehensive theory on social cohesion may be obtained by "elaborating on the causal mechanisms in groups that reciprocally link individual's attitudes and behaviours with the

group-level conditions”. Thus, Friedkin (2004) argues for the importance of studying individual membership attitudes and behaviours in relation to the group as one indication of social cohesion.

2.3.3.1 Individual indicators of social cohesion

Individual indicators are viewed as the interaction that takes place on the level of interaction of an individual member attitude and behaviours. The member attitude means the individual’s “desire or intention to remain in a group, their identification, with or loyalty to a group or other attitudes about the group members” (Friedkin, 2004, p. 410). Thus, a sense of belonging can develop as a result of alliances with learners who share similar values or identities. For example, Dolby (2001) found that learners associated and befriended each other along their preferred popular culture (for instance, similar music preference) and not so much along the racial lines and therefore creating group dynamics where learners were separated on who was and who was not part of the group as a result of personal preferences. Thus according to Friedkin (2004) “individual-level indicators of cohesion, the theoretical proximities of the various indicators are close in that they deal with aspects of person’s attraction or attachment to a group” (p. 410). Therefore sense of belonging as one aspect of social cohesion is attained when a member feels that other members of the group share similar personal preferences as they do.

Marchetti-Mercer (2006) explains that:

personal identity and the concept of 'home' are strongly linked to finding a sense of belonging...[and that an individual's] definitions of oneself are inextricably linked to where one comes from, where one finds oneself and where one is going.... [It is therefore, important that] one must make sense of one's identity and where one truly belongs (pp. 196-7).

The sense of belonging and relatedness in the school that fulfils the feeling of being 'at home' will occur in a school that, according to Osterman (2000), takes cognisance of the following "three aspects: first, that social context plays a significant part in determining whether individual needs are satisfied; second, needs are domain and situation specific; third, needs are on-going" (p. 325). Thus, learners feel that they are part of the school when they can participate in most activities without feeling like outsiders and, when their needs are taken into consideration and aligned to what the school can provide equally to all of them. Ryan (1995) explains that learners who experience belongingness in school but not in sports will function better in the context where their need for recognition is satisfied. For instance, if learners feel that the desegregated school's sporting codes do not cater for their choice of sport that school will continue to experience segregation on the sporting fields, with Indian learners for instance, dominating the cricket fields as a sport supported by the school and thereby fostering feelings of exclusion and disenchantment

towards the school in general by those learners who do not feel their interest catered for.

Belonging implies a bilateral process, as argued in Marchetti-Mercer (2006) because:

it implies both that [learner] should be able to identify with a certain type of [school] community and that [the school] should be able to see and construct itself as a container for individual belonging. It should embody the psychological agonies of the [learners], as well as the political construction of collective symbols for identification (p. 208).

Thus the school's actions towards its learners should be emotionally and psychologically aligned with the needs and interests of the learners (Nichols, 2008). Du Toit (1995) explains that "opening up of school ... to diverse races does not automatically ensure mutual understanding and acceptance between teachers and...learners and amongst...learners" (pp. 212-213). Positive social interactions need to take place (Friedkin, 2004).

Sense of belongingness according to Nichols (2008) should also include the learners' attributions to interpersonal relationships in relation to the teachers and friends; and in relation to their learning and academic progress; and in relation to the opportunities given at the school level. A study by Pierce, Kostova and Dirks (2002) links 'at home' and thus sense of belonging with the state of psychological ownership. They explain that it is natural for people to

be in search of feelings of ownership of a variety of objects, material and immaterial. They agree with Porteous (1976) that there are three satisfactions which derive from ownership: firstly, control over space; secondly, personalisation of space as an assertion of identity; and thirdly, stimulation (achieved, for example, by thinking about, using, improving, or defending one's possessions/territory). Marchetti-Mercer (2006) argues that “one cannot belong to a place, community [like a school] [or] even to a family or a relationship that does not welcome one’s presence and to some extent accommodate one’s psychological and more concrete needs” (p. 208).

2.3.3.2 Group indicators of social cohesion

2.3.3.2.1 Group membership

Friedkin (2004) mentions that individual-level indicators that is, membership attitude and behaviours affect group-level indicators. These indicators comprised for instance of “membership contributing to a particular group task and behaviour conformity” (Friedkin, 2004, p. 410). Learners who feel like part of the group and have a sense of belonging are more likely to have a sense of connectedness with other group members. These members are more likely to develop trust, respect and positive regard to their fellow members and therefore fostering social cohesion in the group.

Racial integration has an impact on the relationships and the group dynamics formed in the school. Friedkin (2004) points out that positive interpersonal

relationship are very important to social cohesion in groups. Related to positive interpersonal relationships, Miller (2002) says that intimate contact [between different persons and/or racial groups] plays an important role in reducing prejudice (p.388). Thus, learners' positive interaction with diverse peers is linked with increases in cultural knowledge and commitment to promoting racial understanding (Hurtado, Meader, Ziskin, Kamimura, & Greene, 2002, p. 8) and can therefore lead to positive interpersonal relationships that will affect individual members' sense of belonging to a particular group.

2.3.3.2.2 Community belonging

Learners, parents, teachers and other staff members' form a school community that impacts on individual learners' sense of belonging. The concept of citizenship is used by Banks, McGee-Banks, Cortés, Hahn, Merryfield, Moodley, Murphy-Shigematsu, Osler, Park, and Parker (2005) to indicate a full member of a particular state or community. An individual with citizenship is afforded rights, protection and opportunities that come with that citizenry. It is therefore, asserts Banks, et. al. (2005) of paramount importance that "in the citizenship education in all democratic societies should help students examine issues and questions related to major social categories such as race, class, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, disability, and sexual orientation" (p. 11) so that all learners can feel like members of the community.

Osterman's (2000) concept of 'community' (p. 323) explains well what it may mean to belong to a community when she refers to Furman's (1998) statement that 'community' is not present until members experience feelings of belonging, trust in others and safety. Hurtado, Meader, Ziskin, Kamimura, and Greene (2002) "by [schools] providing structures and opportunities for interaction with peers in constructive environments that encourage integration in the classroom, playground and other school activities" (p. 23). Castles and Davidson (2000) emphasise that belonging implies a bilateral process, where an individual is able to identify with a certain type of community and on the other hand a community is able to see and construct itself as a container for individual [feelings of] belonging. Thus for learners to have a sense of belonging in a particular school they have to feel that they also form part of the school 'community' and should be able to identify themselves with some if not all practices of the school. The feelings of belonging will be fostered when learners have a sense of identity with the school; they feel trusted and trust that the school community has accepted them.

According to Osterman (2000) the concept of 'community' has two uses as indicated by McMillan and Chavis (1986). The first refers to a territorial or geographic unit and the second is relational and describes the quality or character of human relationships. The school and the interactions that take place during the school assist in building the character of the relations and the individual's sense of belonging in the school and the surroundings.

McMillan and Cavis (1986) propose that community consists of four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection. In essence, for learners to feel part of a community in an organised setting such as the school, the four elements of forming part of the community must be attained. Learners who feel accepted and appreciated for who they are, who can identify with and trust authorities in the school community, will have a sense of belonging. This can be translated into an element of fostering social cohesion because they will be consulted and given the chance to influence changes in the school. In such an environment new entrants need not assimilate but form part of the decision-making structures of the school in their own right.

It is important for learners to know themselves and what their identity is, as this is important in ensuring that each individual learner is respected for who she is, rather than having to assimilate in the new environment (Marchetti-Mercer (2006, pp 196-7). Thus, it is important that the school fosters and affirms learners' identity and that school practices accommodate and include all learners. This is important because learners may identify with the purpose of school but be educated in a specific school environment that is unwelcoming and unaccepting of their culture. Thus it is important to have a synergy between the school environment, policies and practices and the learners' background, culture and traditions in order to establish a sense of belonging.

2.3.3.2.3 Feeling at home in the community

a. A place of enchantment

According to Thaver (2004) the “concept of ‘at home’ is associated with emotions or affective states” (p. 4). Home must not be seen as a physical structure or a geographical location but rather as an emotional space closely linked to some of the individual’s earliest psychological experiences and exerting a ripple effect throughout their lives (Rubenstein, 2001, pp 1-2). People feel and invest emotions in places that they regard as home. According to Thaver (2004) literature on the concept of ‘home’ is divided between those who generate what is called an “enchantment thesis” of home and those who view it as a “contested terrain” (disenchantment) (p. 5).

Thaver (2004) explains that the critical factor in the distinction between ‘home’ and feeling ‘at home’ is in the social relations that are established with other social actors in a given place and which obtain mutual assurances, a sense of fitness and belonging that ultimately generates the feeling of being ‘at home’ (p. 6). Therefore, as a place of enchantment, “an individual can be home but not feel at home, while one can feel at home while being in a total different place” (Thaver, 2004, p. 5). Feelings of ‘at home’ are likely to be experienced when an individual has a positive experience in a strange place. Thus, Thaver (2004) noted “the question is [not] do you feel at home? But, rather where, and with whom, doing what, to what end do you feel comfortable enough to be able to say ‘I feel at home’ or ‘in place’ in a given institution” (p. 6).

In his study on 'Home: The Territorial Core', Porteous (1976) explains that 'home' provides individuals with three territorial satisfactions, namely identity, security, and stimulation. These satisfactions, he asserts, "derive from the control of physical space, and this control is secured in two major means, the personalisation of space in an assertion of identity and a means of ensuring stimulation" (p. 383). For an individual to feel 'at home' she needs to personalise the space that she occupies and this personalisation brings forth feelings of belonging and owning the space. In a school setting, learners would need to feel and see the school environment as their personalised space so that they could identify with and feel secure in their school environment. In summarising, Thaver (2004) argues "spatial order is a function of social solidarity" (p. 8). Viewed as such, "an institutional cultural analysis might seek to draw a close relationship between different physical places of the... [school] and how they articulate with... [learners'] sense of identity, security and stimulation. In other words, assess the extent to which students feel 'at home' across the different sites they occupy (classrooms, library, ablution blocks, tuck-shop, etc.)" (Thaver, 2004, p. 8). Personalisation of space, which is investment of feelings into the home, territory and space, promotes both security and identity (Porteous, 1976, p. 384).

b. A place of disenchantment

As a place of disenchantment, 'at home' means deterritorialising home and/ or representing the contested terrain (Thaver, 2004, p. 4). The binary feelings of belonging and not belonging are addressed by the individual who seeks to belong. Learners might pledge allegiance to a school because they 'have to', but discredit the school's values when they are not watched. In this argument we find learners going between the feelings of, "being home and not being home". We ask whether one's emotions are linked or not linked to the territory where one finds oneself. Emotions related to and the presence of significant others might make an individual feel 'at home' despite adverse conditions. As an extreme example, "Winnie Madikizela-Mandela narrated in her autobiography that when she was banished to Brandfort in 1977, it was her daughter's presence that gave her a sense of belonging and being 'at home' under the harsh conditions she was subjected to" (Benjamin, 1984, p. 40).

Marchetti-Mercer (2006) argues that belonging also refers to a "sense of commitment, loyalty and ultimately emotional connection with the 'home' one has chosen" (p. 208). An individual might feel committed to a particular course, place and the happenings in that environment. This, however, does not constitute feeling welcomed by the school culture and belonging in that culture. Thaver (2004) points out that one might assume that:

there may never be evenness to feeling at home...What one is considering here is that the value system of the institution remains

more or less intact with new entrants seen as guests who are passing through rather than really belonging in the institution (p. 9).

Thus a contested terrain, learners may wear a certain school uniform as an indication of 'being' and 'belonging' in the sense of 'attending' a certain school; however, they might not feel 'at home' because the practices in that school might feel alien to their culture and interests. The celebration of an Indian holiday might be unfamiliar to Black learners and result in their feeling 'tied' to a school due to forced circumstances not free choice. Again, such learners might feel accepted due to the friendships that they have forged in the school, but excluded when it comes to observing certain practices such as fasting at Ramadan or feasting at Eid.

2.4 Conclusion

In a quest to promote social cohesion in society, and especially through education and in terms of addressing the past inequalities, school desegregation was introduced as a redress policy by the newly elected government in 1994 to include races in school environments that were previously regarded as racially exclusive.

In this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate, through the analysis of racial integration and belonging as an individual-level dimension of social cohesion, that the construction of racial identity requires a critical perspective in terms of its influence on belonging, racial integration and mental health. The literature

on social cohesion is prolific, but despite its proliferation, it suffers from theoretical and conceptual confusion while academic research on social cohesion in South Africa is scanty.

This study represents an attempt at a deeper understanding of the construct of sense of belonging as one contributor to social cohesion. The exploratory nature of this study is therefore particularly aimed at generating hypotheses that can guide research on social cohesion.

In the next chapter, I describe the choice and appropriateness of an Interactive Qualitative Research Design to achieve these aims.