SOCIAL COHESION IN SCHOOL CHOIR COMPETITIONS:
THE EXPERIENCES OF CONDUCTORS AND ADJUDICATORS

by

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A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of

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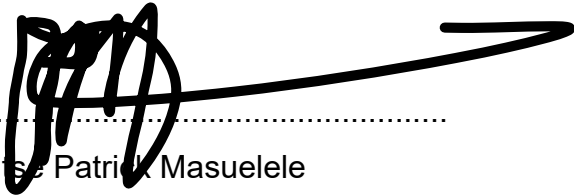
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Declaration

I declare that the thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution".

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3 November 2020

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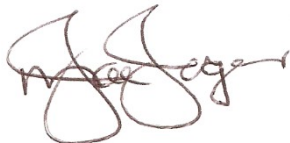   PRETORIA

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"No weapon formed against me shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17)

Abstract

In this qualitative study the researcher investigates how school choir competitions in South Africa contribute to creating platforms for social cohesion. The study examines the experiences of conductors and adjudicators in two main South African school choir competitions, namely the ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe (previously known as SASCE). This study was inspired by the contribution of the rising choral music platform in post-apartheid South Africa to national regeneration from tensions created by past disparities and how choral music contributes to social cohesion in society. Phenomenology is used to investigate the experiences of conductors and adjudicators and whether participation in choral competitions contributed to advancing social cohesion in a transforming South Africa. Data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, the review of documents and the analysis of journal notes taken during the study. The Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) was applied as framework to contextualise deliberate reflection involving increased social knowledge and openness among respondents. In this study, choir conductors and adjudicators reflected on their experiences in choir competitions and how cohesion could be achieved through choir competitions. From the study the researcher concluded that competitive platforms such as choir competitions provide an opportunity for role players to test their strength as individuals and as part of a team. The study found that, regardless of many challenges hindering social cohesion, choral music competitions offer an environment for bringing people closer and establishing harmonious collaboration. Learning from others, sharing and reciprocating experiences lead to new partnerships that promote social cohesion. However, the conditions set out in the rules and policy requirements of the competitions could inhibit social cohesion by exclusion and conditions that may hinder interest. Although many studies focus on the value of choral activities and its contribution to social cohesion, this study fills the gap of exploring the role of choir competitions in fostering social cohesion. Recommendations include the need to foster an awareness of the role of school choir activities, which includes the selection of music, in encouraging nation-building. Furthermore, school choir competition policy should include clearer guidelines on social cohesion. It is recommended that training opportunities for conductors and adjudicators should be expanded and implemented to include musical development, but also focus on fostering a sensitivity to the complexity of cultural diversity and the power of choral activities to enhance nation-building and social cohesion in South Africa.

Keywords: choir competition; choir competition adjudication; choir conductor; cultural diversity; social cohesion; South African school choirs

List of abbreviations

ATKV	Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DCC	District Coordinating Committees
DoE	Department of Education
EU	European Union
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Departments Committee
NCC	National Coordinating Committee
NDP	National Development Plan
PCC	Provincial Coordinating Committees
SASCE	South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod
TLT	Transformative Learning Theory
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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Chapter 1: Orientation of the study

1.1 Introduction

"Choral singing can be one of the most powerful unifying forces between nations".[1] Imagine participating in a South African choir competition as a choir member, an experience heightened by excitement, energy, and tension that is almost tangible. Choirs from different cultural backgrounds take part and render their performances to the reserved, focused adjudication panel and a cheering audience. Choir members encourage each other, support other choirs and after the concert, join in singing in languages that can only be shared in joyous songs. Are these experiences valuable or only fleeting moments of shared musical experiences, or do they extend further to denote a significant environment, rich with promising possibilities to strengthen social cohesion?

The ideal which seeks pathways in which social justice and cohesion can be realised is a global point of interest (Thrift & Sugarman, 2019; Byrd & Levy, 2011). Numerous scholars recognise the value, but also the challenges and tension presented in the quest towards social cohesion (Chan, To & Chan, 2006; Green, Janmaat & Han, 2009; Desai, 2015; Palmary, 2015). The ways in which choir singing, specifically in competitions, may offer opportunities for shaping a sense of social cohesion in times of intensifying uncertainty in a diverse South African and global landscape, are examined in this research.

Social cohesion provides the conceptual framework that guided this research. Social inclusion, social capital and social justice, concepts closely related to the concept of social cohesion, are also included in this research. Chan et al. (2006:290) define social cohesion as "...interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations". In the contemporary world, governments and other organisations around the globe are striving to create platforms that can be used to build bridges for better socio-cultural relations. The South

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[1] International Federation of Choral Music (2016).

African social cohesion strategy requires integration in communities and society at large (South Africa, 2012). Social cohesion is about members of the society expressing spontaneous respect for their institutions and a profound sense of loyalty (Chipkin & Ngqulunga, 2008).

Social cohesion is often discussed against the perceptions of deterioration of society, exacerbated by external forces that counteract the growth of social cohesion in society. Such perceptions are manifested by their impact and globalisation, the information age, increasing diversity (multiculturalism), unemployment, income inequalities, and homelessness (HSRC, 2004). As a consequence, policies and strategic instruments that might offer context and direction for the realisation of socially coherent societies have lately been put in place by many governments and multinational organisations. These initiatives stem from the need to ensure that people in all societies have access to human rights and social justice. A landmark example in this regard was the establishment of the Council of Europe's Social Cohesion Strategy (CESS) in 2010. The CESS established the Platform of European Social Cohesion (PECS), an inter-governmental operational structure tasked to enhance the implementation of social cohesion programmes of the Council of Europe. The function of the PECS, among other initiatives, is to promote equal and effective enjoyment of social rights and to mainstream the social cohesion perspective in the activities of all relevant committees and bodies of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2017). All these initiatives point to the explanation of "society …[as] 'cohesive' if it 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 social mobility" (OECD, 2012:51).

Education programmes may be thought to be the solution to the establishment of social cohesion, but as Salmon and Sayed (2016:4) explain, "[e]ducation programmes were in the past mainly treated as forms of development that were separate from (post) conflict processes of stabilisation, peace building and reconciliation". We thus see that schools are not only intended for the primary function of educating, but also have a latent function of creating relational bridges that are revealed in levels of co-operation and collaboration. It is, therefore, appropriate to investigate the role of school choir competitions in contributing to the development of social cohesion. The study

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resonates with Burns, Hull, Lefko-Everett and Njozela (2018:11) who point out that "[i]n South Africa, the concept of *ubuntu* has, for many, become synonymous with social cohesion, nation-building and efforts to bridge the cultural and racial divides of the past". In this study I sought to find a better understanding of how choir singing platforms enhance cohesion in society.

1.2 Background

For centuries, many European, Eastern and African countries functioned largely as culturally homogeneous states where citizens mainly spoke the same language and had the same or a similar cultural background. In the contemporary world we are increasingly "moving from monocultural to a transcultural exchange of approaches and ideas" in music practices (Joseph, 2014:11). Consequently, monocultural choirs were the norm and the music produced and taught was similar and culturally based. With the technological resources available now, the world has increasingly become smaller and people are exposed to more cultures. "Music education in our time faces many challenges that can be related to the contemporary condition of globalization and its dynamics" (Tepa & Fyr, 2019:74). Jones (2015:131) confirms that "[w]e live in a global era in which more people, societies, and cultures are coming into contact with more others than at any time in history". People are regularly exposed to an increasingly diverse array of peoples, ideas, and goods – including cultural products from around the world. Efforts to achieve social reforms for social cohesion have been made in many countries and by multilateral organisations around the globe. At an international level, the establishment of the Council of Europe's Social Cohesion Strategy (CESS) was one of the landmark initiatives.

In a culturally diverse South African context, society has increasingly been experiencing transformation since 1994 and the government has been striving to eliminate discrepancies relating to the unequal systems of the apartheid[2] era. One of the main transformative moves that the South African government initiated, was social

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[2]Apartheid was a system of government in South Africa that promoted racial policies and separate development between different racial groups. It was introduced by the National Party in 1948. In 1994, the system gave way to the first democratic elections, ushering in a non-racial and none-discriminating government of the people (Civic Academy, 2018).

cohesion and nation-building. In 2004 the South African Department of Arts and Culture commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to conduct a research project to assess the "social health of the nation". This research used three focus areas to determine a focus and framework, namely, social cohesion, social capital and social justice. Another initiative to investigate how choirs in the school sector contribute to unity and nation building has been set in motion. This has resulted in the Department of Basic Education publishing the schools protocol for the organisation, management, co-ordination and monitoring of school music competitions and/or festivals for public schools in South Africa (South Africa, 2000). This protocol (hereafter referred to as the protocol) serves to affirm the importance of public-school competitions as a contributor to the welfare of learners in their artistic aspirations.

In 2012 the South African government instructed the Department of Arts and Culture (South Africa, 2012 (a)) to arrange an annual summit for social cohesion, which culminated in the adoption of the Social Cohesion and Nation Building Strategy. The sole purpose of this strategy was to address concerns about a lack of unity among South Africans (Palmary, 2015).

According to the South African National Development Plan (NDP) adopted in 2012, it is the responsibility of the government to fund arts and culture programmes that seek to promote South African citizens' knowledge of each other's cultures. The NDP further calls for both government and society to promote and celebrate multilingualism. This is one of the ways through which social cohesion can be promoted and nurtured (South Africa, 2012). The plan emphasises the way in which music should be used to enhance relations in society and reinforce the growing canon of literature on the value that music can add to people's lives.

During the apartheid era in South Africa, the school sector was characterised by social divisions and choir competitions were arranged and based on certain languages and cultural orientations to the exclusion of others. In this regard, "choral music in South Africa provided a means of fostering segregation" (Haecker, 2012:10). Following the 1994 introduction of a non-racial, non-discrimination state in South Africa, the legal basis for racial separation was nullified. Schools, specifically in urban centres, became

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more diverse in learner composition – not only in terms of race, but also in terms of language, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Following these developments, choirs were confronted with the increasing expectation of cultural diversity in choral programmes. Choral singing in the South African school sector was at the confluence of social transformation (Barrett, 2008). The prescribed repertoire and song selection for choirs at choir competitions has changed and conductors have been expected to no longer focus only on monolingual or monocultural preference, but to introduce songs from different languages and cultural backgrounds (Van Aswegen, 2011). The status of choral music has also shifted from being an extramural activity to a melting pot of cultural integration. Emerging challenges have included dealing with language barriers, incorporating aspects such as movement and dance and percussion or drumming accompaniments.

Another noticeable feature that signifies reform in choral music is the inclusion of musical and textual elements of traditional African traits in compositions of choral music (Haecker, 2012). New repertoire has emerged, including the various arrangements of South African traditional songs as well as newly composed choral works that reflect elements of African music. Choir activities form an important part of the South African cultural milieu. Research reveals that the popularity of choir music has grown, and its presence has increased in South African schools (Van der Walt, 2004; Van Aswegen, 2006). The great support that choral activities in South Africa enjoy has strengthened the relevance of the investigation at hand.

1.3 Research on choir competitions

In this study the researcher investigated various facets of choir competitions including the reliability of adjudication rubric forms, the improvement of performance evaluation, racial influences, social cohesion and the improvement of support to choirs from principals, administrators and parents. The influence of the South African national education system on choral Eisteddfods, challenges regarding the adjudication of indigenous traditional music, and reasons for participation in choral competitions were also examined.

A number of studies investigated the reliability of adjudication rubrics and the improvement of performance evaluation (Norris & Borst, 2007; Stegman, 2009; Latimer, 2007). Hansen (2017) uncovered factors that may influence adjudicators' decisions when adjudicating choral performances. The study provides insight into adjudicators' perspectives about what influences their rating decisions. The study advocates for improved practices in performance evaluation. Hensley's (2016) research offers insight into the views of the choral adjudicator, and reports on what criteria followed in the adjudicating process are guided by critical standards of performance. As part of exploring the reliability of the adjudication process, Napoles (2009) investigated whether viewing a musical score while listening (as opposed to not viewing the score) had any effect on the ratings of choral performance. Napoles (2009) found that the group that did not see the scores at any time gave significantly lower ratings than the group that saw all of the scores.

Research by Louw (2014) focused on the experiences and views of primary and secondary school singers as well as conductors to gain a better understanding of the choral singing programme in South Africa. Louw's study points out that a better understanding of the experiences of choir singers and conductors can contribute to improving the support received from principals, administrators and parents for extracurricular choral activities at schools. In this study the researcher focused on the ability of music to bridge gaps on cultural levels and inter-personal relations in the areas of learning, growth, bridging, bonding, belonging and well-being.

Studies examining the influence of racial aspects in choir competitions include a South African study by Mashamaite (2014) and an American study by Cheek (2007). In his research, Cheek (2007) investigated the influence of race and racial perceptions on the way adjudicators evaluate choirs. The study conducted by Mashamaite focused on the participation of choirs in the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE) as well as Die Bosveld Kunstefees (translated as the Bushveld Arts Festival) presented within the Polokwane cluster of circuits in the Capricorn district of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study focused on racially divided participation, the role of choral aptitude, preferences of choral style and cultural identity in a pluralistic society.

Dzorkpey (2011) investigated how the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE) was influenced by the South African national education system and the environment within which it operated. The study examined the extent to which the objectives of SASCE were realised. Mpetshwa (2019) focused was on the adjudication of indigenous folklore songs (also referred to as South African indigenous or traditional music) in the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE). The findings in that study indicate that there was a lack of a reliable rating scale for the levels of competence of choirs performing indigenous music. In this study the researcher explored the perceptions of adjudicators and choir conductors within this context.

1.4 Problem statement

A South African study by Davids, Struwig, Roberts, Sithole, Weir-Smith and Mokhele (2011) reports that socio-cultural cohesion has scored low in comparison to economic and civic cohesion. These results reveal weak levels of social trust, personal well-being, racial tolerance and interracial contact in South Africa. Choir singing and the participation in choir competitions form a vital part of South African cultural activities (Van der Walt, 2004; Barrett, 2008; Bouwer, 2009; Dzorkpey, 2011; De Beer & Shitandi, 2012; Van As, 2014; Van der Sandt, 2013). This status of choral singing indicates the relevance of exploring cross-cultural participation in choral activities and the potential that exists to address the problem concerning a low level of socio-cultural cohesion (Davids et al., 2011). The potential of participation in choir events (of which competitions form a strong part in South African choral activities) towards strengthening social cohesion in South African society needs to be explored. Existing research has focused on the contribution of choral singing toward social cohesion; however, limited research has been done on the role of choir competitions in strengthening social cohesion.

1.5 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the influence of school choir activities, specifically competitions, on social cohesion. Firstly, the study explored the experiences of choir conductors and adjudicators who had participated in two South African school choir competitions, with the focus on their perceptions on choral singing

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as a vehicle to strengthen social cohesion. The research explored whether and how the conductors' and adjudicators' personal experiences as active participants in competitions have shaped their perceptions of social cohesion through choral singing.

Secondly, the study sought to determine how two school choir competitions (ABC Motsepe[3] and ATKV-Applous – each with its own unique historical identity) contributed to the development of social cohesion. The study aimed to find a better understanding of how participation in choir singing and choir competitions enhance cohesion in the South African society.

1.6 Research questions

In order to address the problem and purpose of the study, and offer structure and direction to the research, the following primary research question was asked: What can we learn from experiences of choral conductors and adjudicators on how school choir competitions contribute to social cohesion in a transforming South Africa?

The following secondary research questions guided the researcher in finding answers to the primary question:

- Secondary question 1: What are the experiences of choir conductors and adjudicators and their perception on choral singing as a vehicle to strengthen social cohesion?
- Secondary question 2: How do the two school choir competitions (ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous) contribute to the development of social cohesion in South Africa?
- Secondary question 3: How can the values and assumptions of conductors and adjudicators in the light of experiences and knowledge they acquired during participation in choral competitions, be interpreted through the lens of the Transformative Learning Theory?

These research questions directed the study and are explored in the following chapters.

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[3] The ABC Motsepe Choir Competition was previously known as The South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE).

1.7 Research design and methodology

This study investigated the experiences of conductors and adjudicators in South African school choir competitions since 1994. The selected respondents were choir conductors and adjudicators of choir competitions. Since the role of conductors and adjudicators in competitions are very different, this choice opened possibilities to explore the tension between achieving social cohesion on the one hand, and the competitive element that could counteract social cohesion on the other hand. The respondents were mainly based in Gauteng[4]. However, due to purposive sampling and the snowball effect, a few respondents from other provinces were also included.

A research design is a plan of how the study will be conducted (Mouton, 2011). It is a drawing board for selecting participants, research sites and data collection procedures to propose answers to the research question (Maree, 2012). This study was based on a phenomenological design where participants accounted on their perceptions of their participation in choral competitions. According to Badenhorst (2010:92), qualitative research relies on data in the form of words. Phenomenological research is, therefore, "concerned with the lived experiences of people" (Groenewald, 2004:4) where the inquirer collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon. Creswell (2014:76) contends that phenomenological methods and transformative learning theory complement each other since the researcher focuses on the individual who possesses experiences that they can share through conversation – as individual respondents or in focus groups. The scope of this research represents Creswell's (2014) emphasis as it explores the experiences of choral competitions of thirty individual conductors and adjudicators. Three sources of data collection were used: semi-structured interviews, document analysis and generating insights from reflective notes in the researcher's research journal. This approach contributed to triangulation and "ensuring internal validity" of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018:208). The purposive sampling method was used in this study. Participants were chosen from the sample of conductors and adjudicators who had participated in the two choir competitions. Interviews with participants were conducted at the participants' places of

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[4] Gauteng is one of the nine provinces of South Africa.

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work, or at other convenient venues. During the interviews, some participants suggested the names of other possible participants (snowball effect).

The research focused on two of the main national choir competitions in South African schools, namely ATKV-Applous[5] and ABC Motsepe. These annual choir competitions involve participation of school learners from different regions across South Africa. The role players involved in the school choir milieu include the learner singers, conductors, accompanist/s, organisers and/or administrators, parents, audience members and government bodies. The conductors and adjudicators participating in these competitions were chosen as the primary informants in this study.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The study was situated within the theoretical threads of the Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), also referred to as Perspective Transformation. Although the TLT is associated with Kuhn's (1962) paradigm, Freire's (1970) conscientisation, and Habermas's (1971) domains of learning, Mezirow (1991) is recognised as the pioneer of this theory (Howie & Bagnall, 2013). Mezirow (1991) established his own version of the Transformative Learning Theory to develop "the significant concepts of disorienting dilemma, meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, perspective transformation, frame of reference, level of learning processes, habits of mind, and critical self-reflection" (Howie & Bagnall, 2013:107). An important element of Mezirow's TLT is the value of communicative dialogues to address internal and external disputes arising from perception shifts (Christie, Carey, Robertson & Grainger, 2015). TLT in this regard, is concerned with "understanding and facilitating profound change at both individual and societal levels" (Jones, 2015:267). The researcher in this study bases his use of TLT on the argument that choir music can play a potential role in the creation of social cohesion among school learners, conductors, adjudicators and communities at large. The researcher contends that role players' (specifically conductors' and adjudicators') involvement in choral music, provide them with an opportunity to shape, align, and

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[5] ATKV-Applous refers to the South African school choir competition project of the Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging, a non-governmental Afrikaans movement that was formed in 1930 to preserve the Afrikaans language (ATKV, 2019).

position their perspectives within the current societal context. The involvement of these role players has the potential to transform views and perceptions to position them more favourably to deal with the emerging and changing dynamics in the choral music space in the broader South African landscape where they operate.

The principles of the Transformative Learning Theory were key in this study as they provided the researcher with guidelines to frame the questions, purpose, research methods and analyse of data for this research. TLT in this study refers to a process of learning where individual role players reflect on the way they make meaning and examine which of their beliefs they need to modify. In this study the tenets of the TLT were understood as follows: the disorienting dilemma are those habits and practices that are no longer deemed appropriate in the constitutional democracy based on human rights in South Africa and need to be repealed and replaced with alternatives that are suitable for use in the current dispensation. In South Africa, institutions and individuals are required to adapt their positions by reviewing their old mindsets and perspectives on human relations. In choral music, disorienting behaviour includes rigid and stereotypical tendencies which serve to exclude others in some communities. In South African communities, this included prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination on racial and cultural lines. In line with the Transformative Learning Theory, data were collected to investigate how conductors and adjudicators perceived their roles in choir competitions towards social cohesion.

1.9 Relevance of the study

This study addresses the potential contribution of choral platforms, such as choir competitions, to develop social cohesion in the South African society. The research firstly documents how conductors' and adjudicators' personal experiences as participants in competitions have shaped their perceptions of social cohesion through choral singing.

Secondly, the study investigated the influence of two school choir competitions (ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous) on the development of social cohesion. The growing interest in the role or failure of social cohesion in societies worldwide is widely documented (Jeannotte, 2003; Langston & Barrett, 2008: Chan et al., 2006; Jones,

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2015; Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010; Byrd & Levy, 2011; Janmaat, 2011; OECD, 2011; Cloete, 2014; Burns et al., 2018; Corvo & De Caro, 2020). Mickelson and Nkomo (2012:32), affirm the important role of social cohesion:

> Finally, the growing demographic heterogeneity of many contemporary nation states will inevitably impose a material reality on citizens, parents, employers, and policymakers: Social cohesion is a compelling imperative in the interests not only of citizens' own social stability and prosperity but, vitally, of their active and constructive engagement in the broader world system.

Research reveals that South Africa is in dire need of the development of social cohesion in an economic as well as social context. This alarming situation is confirmed by Burns et al. (2018:1):

> Promoting social cohesion is one of the most difficult, yet one of the most important, challenges facing South Africa. However, while there is widespread agreement that social cohesion influences economic and social development, and that nurturing a more cohesive society is an important policy goal in itself, little progress has been made in trying to measure it and track progress in this domain over time.

This study responds to the need of exploring ways of developing social cohesion through choral platforms in a socio-cultural context. Corvo and De Caro (2020:S248) report on the role of social cohesion through music making to strengthen communities in Italy during lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

> The use of singing as a coping strategy as well as to improve the sense of cohesion is evident. Individuals used their identity—in terms of songs chosen—to avoid feelings of loneliness and to enhance their mood in these times of uncertainty. … Greater vision must be given to the development of social cohesion and to social support in terms of social networks and the development of social capital.

The South African government introduced the social cohesion strategy in 2012 to guide its approach towards a cohering society. In the school sector, the Department of Basic Education published the protocol which positions school choir competitions as a platform for social cohesion (Department of Education 2012). Experiences of choir conductors and adjudicators with regard to the contribution of choir music to social cohesion, however, are yet to be noted.

Looking at the school choir competitions and its vastness in the new democratic South Africa, the researcher set out to enquire from choir conductors and adjudicators how school choir competitions could contribute to social cohesion. The aim of this study was to determine how school choral singing could potentially help to improve this situation by contributing to social cohesion in the new democratic South Africa. The study sheds light on how various school-based choral competitions had to adapt their processes and procedures in line with the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution).

The contribution of this research is positioned in the focus on adjudication practices and choir competitions. Research focusing on choir competitions and how competitive community events could address the development of social cohesion is limited and still needs to be explored.

Bouwer (2009) argues that South Africans tend to work in isolation from each rather than working together and sharing. She blames this on the apartheid government's policies, which reinforced social divisions. Having experienced negative experiences in the past, sparked the researcher's interest to undertake this study to determine the role of choir competitions in creating social cohesion in the future.

1.10 Concept clarification

In the following section the researcher offers clarification of the key concepts used in this study.

1.10.1 Social cohesion

Research points out that the concept "social cohesion" is diverse, complex and problematic to define, and that a generally accepted definition does not exist (Oxoby, 2009; OECD, 2012; Cloete, 2014). The OECD report (2012:63) proposes that "[s]ocial cohesion implies a society [that] is "cohesive" if it 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 social mobility". The term "social cohesion" refers to the degree of social inclusion in communities and society as a whole and the extent to which there is an expression of shared solidarity (South Africa, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the concept "social cohesion" refers to the efforts that are made by organisations, be they civic organisations, community institutions and government, to pursue social unity in groups and as a nation within their diverse cultures and historical orientations. Concepts associated with social cohesion include social capital, social inclusion, social justice and social mobility. In the following sections, each of these concepts is clarified.

1.10.2 Social capital

Bourdieu and Coleman (Herreros, 2004:6) define the term "social capital" as "a representation of the resources available to individuals thanks to their participation in social networks". Tzanakis (2013:3–7) unpacks the theories of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam to conclude what the concept "social capital" entails. He explains that "[s]ocial capital for Bourdieu is related to the size of network and the volume of past accumulated social capital commanded by the agent" (Bourdieu, 1986:249). Coleman's definition is closely related to that of Bourdieu: "social capital consists of some aspect of social structure, and facilitates certain actions of actors whether persons or corporate actors within the structure" (Coleman, 1988:S98). Putnam refers to social capital as the "features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and

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trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993(a):35). Cloete (2014:2) describes it as follows: "Social cohesion and social capital are interdependent and … context plays a significant role in the formation thereof … Social capital forms one of the key elements of social cohesion … Components of trust, social networks, norms and reciprocity seem to be prominent in social capital formation". However, all these are fundamental in a socially cohering society as they are the catalysts of ultimate solidarity derived from social cohesion.

1.10.3 Distinguishing between social capital and social cohesion

Building on research by Dayton-Johnson (2003), Oxoby (2009:5) distinguishes between social capital and social cohesion: "Social capital is an individual's sacrifices (time, effort, consumption) made in an effort to promote cooperation with others" while "[s]ocial cohesion is a characteristic of society which depends on the accumulated social capital". Cloete (2014:2) differentiates between the two concepts explaining that "social capital refers to a group of individuals whilst social cohesion includes the entire society". In this regard, social cohesion is the ultimate outcome of a society that enjoys social capital, either as families, communities or as institutions.

1.10.4 Social inclusion

Social inclusion a process in which individuals, groups or institutions are interconnected within a wider social system, and their relationships are maintained and enhanced in a harmonious way (Dugarova, 2015). Oxoby (2009:7) characterises social inclusion with the way in which individuals perceive their "access to institutions and resources in the decision-making environment". Inclusive societies, therefore, assure their citizens of a reasonable sense of belonging. This contributes to well-being and feeling good.

1.10.5 Social justice

Zajda, Majhanovich, and Rust (2006:15) explain the concept of social justice as follows: "[a] social policy is the natural aspiration of all democratic societies and remains the only long-term guarantee for developing and sustaining peace, tolerance,

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and harmony in the world". Social justice is a fundamental lever of society and provides balance and shape for institutions in that society. Societies whose value systems are impinged on social justice, promote human rights and the rule of law (Levy & Patz 2015). According to the HSRC (2004), social justice strengthens the principles embedded in the Constitution, including human dignity, equity, and freedom to participate in all of the political, socio-economic and cultural spheres of society.

1.10.6 The relation between social cohesion, social capital, social inclusion and social mobility

The OECD (2012:63) views "social cohesion through three different, but equally important, lenses: social inclusion, social capital and social mobility", defined as follows:

> Social inclusion: measured by such aspects of social exclusion as poverty, inequality and social polarisation; Social capital: combines measures of trust (interpersonal and societal) with various forms of civic engagement; and Social mobility: measures the degree to which people can or believe they can change their position in society.

1.10.7 School choir
In the context of this study, the meaning of the concepts, "choir" and "school choir", are understood as follows:

- **Choir**

Encyclopaedia Britannica (1964) defines the term "choir" as a body of singers with more than one voice to a part. A choir can be can comprise of a mixture of men and women (boys and girls) or boys or girls only in boys' or girls' schools. For the purpose of this study a choir includes boys and girls combined or girls or boys only gathered as a team singing together.

- **School choir**

The term "school choir" refers to extracurricular work involving school-going learners. Choirs are encouraged by the Department of Basic Education through the policy known as the protocol (see chapter 3), or participation in school choirs is motivated by school principals/the community/conductors. The two choir competitions explored in this study involve the following levels in South African schools: Junior choir (Grades 1–3 in primary schools), Senior Choir (Grades 4–7 in primary schools) and High School choirs (Grades 8–12 in secondary schools).

1.10.8 Choir competition

For the purpose of this study, the concept "choir competition" refers to a formally organised gathering of school choirs who enter to compete by being evaluated by adjudicators appointed by the competition organisers. Rules, including categories and prescribed music, are followed. Choir competitions in this study are viewed as a potential platform that can create opportunities for groups to participate in sharing the performance of choir music and competing. Competitions provide choirs the opportunity to exhibit their talents and abilities in exchange for recognition by way of getting rewards for their efforts. As a result, they are a platform of communal interaction and sharing of heritage of cultures and social values. In this study, choirs are regarded as podiums through which interaction of different cultures can be created. They afford communities the opportunity to meet in public spaces, view each other when performing, and appreciate the quality of music with which they are served. In school choir competitions young people find opportunities to get to know each other.

1.10.9. Experiences

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines the word "experience" as "the process of getting knowledge or skill from doing, seeing, or feeling things". In this study, therefore, the term "experiences" refers to individual's thoughts and opinions about things they have observed and experienced in their involvement in school choir competitions – shared by conductors and adjudicators during the semi-structured interviews.

1.10.10 Choir conductor

In this study, the term "choir conductor" refers to any person who is tasked with the responsibility of leading a school choir – "[s]omeone who directs the performance of musicians or a piece of music" (Cambridge English Dictionary). These are mainly educators with the role guarding the interest of the schools they represent at the competitions as well as to be responsible for the musical and personal growth of the learners.

1.10.11 Adjudicator

In this study, the term "adjudicator" refers to choral specialists who are appointed to judge the performances of choirs at the school competitions or "a person or group that makes an official decision about something" (www.dictionary.cambridge.org), in the context of this study, on the performance standard of choirs. They are perceived to be experienced experts who have proved themselves as successful conductors in the choral community and who understand the criteria and can successfully apply it in the adjudication process. Their sole mandate is to mediate the competitions objectively and to ensure that the choir they collectively view as the best, wins. They are expected to follow guidelines, including ethical aspects, in relation to the two competitions referred to in this study.

1.10.12 Multicultural choral education

Multicultural choral education refers to "the integration of music from many cultures into music curricula" [choral repertoire] (Ely & Rashkin, 2005:277). Ely and Rashkin (2005:277) continue to explain that "[t]he purpose of multi-cultural choral education is to increase an awareness and understanding of other cultures through music ... [that] allows students to develop respect and tolerance for diversity and to realize that there are many other valid forms of musical expression apart for Western traditions". The complexity and various understandings of the concepts of culture and multiculturalism are discussed as part of the literature study in chapter 2.

1.11 Limitations and delimitations of the study

Limitations of the study include the following: The number of participants depended on the goodwill of conductors and adjudicators who had been invited and those who had agreed to voluntary participation in the research. Since the researcher had to identify school choir conductors (the majority unknown to him), the researcher had to rely on the snowballing effect to increase the number and to include participants from different cultural backgrounds. The pool of adjudicators in South Africa is limited and, therefore, also influenced the relatively small number of adjudicator respondents. Although the insights gained by the participants shed valuable light on the research problem, the outcomes cannot be generalised and applied to the wider South African choral community.

Since many of the participants, especially the available adjudicators, live in different parts of the country, the researcher had agreed to conduct some of the interviews after choir events. Some participants would originally accept the invitation to participate, but due to the prolonged hours of competitions, they would fail to honour the appointment.

Delimitations include the choices the researcher had made, considering practical implications. The researcher has chosen to include conductors and adjudicators and, therefore, not minor children (who presents additional and often challenging ethical considerations and permission). The document analysis does not include the reports of adjudicators, since that proved to be problematic to obtain. The researcher also decided to set the boundaries by focusing on two South African choir competitions, offering different cultural backgrounds and perspectives, in the process excluding many other choir festivals and competitions.

1.12 Overview of chapters

Chapter 1 offers an orientation to the study, including the background and an overview of existing research on choir competitions. This is followed by the problem statement, purpose of the study and the primary and secondary research questions. The Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), as theoretical design, is then introduced. The chapter concludes with the relevance of the study and explains the limitation and delimitation of the study. The chapter focuses on clarifying social cohesion and related concepts and provides a discussion of choral singing in society, role players in choir competitions and choir competitions itself.

In chapter 2 an overview on contributions in literature pertaining to social cohesion and choral singing, with the focus on participation in choir competitions, presented. The chapter includes a discussion of key concepts explored in the study: social cohesion and related concepts (social inclusion, social capital and social justice), as well as culture and related concepts (cultural and musical identity, cultural diversity, cultural capital and cultural transmission). In the chapter the researcher considers tension between the nature of competitions and social cohesion, and the influence of cultural diversity on social cohesion as a possible outcome of choir competitions. The following themes are discussed in this chapter: the global and South African interest in choral singing and in participation in choir competitions; choral singing from an African perspective; community singing and social cohesion; and choir competitions (including role players and the reliability of adjudication practices).

In chapter 3 Transformative Learning Theory that serves as theoretical framework for the study is addressed. In this chapter TLT is explained, its relevance in the study and how it contributes towards the aims of the study, are discussed.

Chapter 4 outlines the research design, methodology, sampling strategy and data collection methods. The data collection tools are explained, and the chapter concludes with ethical principles relevant to the study.

Chapter 5 focuses on the data analysis and findings. Documents used for the administration and running of the ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous choir competitions are analysed separately and findings offered. The analysis of data gathered from the semi-structured interviews and the findings are presented. The data generated from the researcher's personal reflective research journal are analysed and the findings presented.

Chapter 6 is structured to respond to the three secondary research questions and finally the primary research question. Firstly, by discussing the experiences and perceptions of choir conductors and adjudicators on choral singing as a vehicle to strengthen social cohesion. Secondly, the contribution of ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous to the development of social cohesion in South Africa is discussed. Thirdly, the experiences and knowledge gained by conductors and adjudicators during their participation in choral competitions, are discussed through the TLT lens. Lastly, the primary research question on what we can learn from the experiences of choral conductors and adjudicators on how school competitions contribute to social cohesion in a transforming South Africa, are discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, recommendations, and the conclusion.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the scope of the research focusing on how choir singing, specifically in competitions, can offer opportunities for shaping a sense of social cohesion in times of intensifying uncertainty in a diverse South African and global landscape. Social cohesion and related concepts including social inclusion, social capital, social mobility and social justice provides the conceptual framework guiding this research. The study explores the role of choir activities in the creation of social cohesion through the theoretical lens of the Transformative Learning Theory.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an overview of contributions found in literature pertaining to social cohesion and choral singing, with the focus on participation in choir competitions. The chapter first focuses on clarifying social cohesion and related concepts. This is followed by a discussion of choral singing in society, role players in choir competitions and choir competitions themselves. The chapter culminates with the unpacking of possible tensions and connections between choir competitions and social cohesion.

2.2 Social cohesion

Social cohesion has received significant attention across disciplinary focuses, including sociology, social psychology, economics and politics (Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Beauvais & Jenson, 2002; Chan et al., 2006; Carrasco & Bilal, 2016; Schiefer & Van der Noll, 2017). The quest for defining the concept of social cohesion has been addressed by many scholars and remains an ongoing process (Beauvais & Jenson, 2002). The research interest in social cohesion is relevant considering a world where urbanisation has had a vast impact on society.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development there is a growing concern that the bonds that keep societies together within modern society seem to be declining. For social inclusion to be realised, the importance of removing barriers to people's participation and active inclusion are underlined (United Nations, 2016).

According to this United Nations (UN) report, social inclusion is the deliberate process of encompassing and welcoming all persons and embracing greater equality and tolerance. This process generates cohesiveness amongst members of society and eliminates exclusion and marginalisation (Cloete, 2014). According to Norton and De Haan (2013), reference to social cohesions is found as early as the 15th century formulation by Ibn Khaldun (viewed by some as the father of sociology). His concept

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of *asabiyah (*strength through solidarity leading to broader social integration) reflects the ideals of social cohesion. The origin of social cohesion as an intellectual concept is generally traced back to the book, *De la division du travail social* (The division of labour in society), by the French sociologist, Durkheim (Chan et al., 2006; Norton & De Haan, 2013). Against the backdrop of social transformation during the industrialisation in Europe, Durkheim explains how the transformation of societies has influenced the nature of cohesion. He identified two types of society. On the one hand, traditional societies characterised by cohesion that mechanically stems from a solid shared ethos based on the relative homogeneity of their activities as part of their life and work, while on the other hand, as society progresses, the collaboration between members of the society shifts toward a more progressive capitalist society as people engage in multi-faceted divisions of specialised labour towards cohesion (OECD, 2012; Norton & De Haan, 2013). Norton and De Haan (2013:7) single out Bourdieu as "arguably the most important sociologist at the basis of the social capital literature that surged in the 1990s". Bourdieu underlines the value of an individual's participation and investment in groups. Related to social cohesion is the influential role that Putnam played in using the concept of social cohesion based on the traditions in Italian communities (Norton & De Haan, 2013).

In the past years, researchers and policy makers have reflected a growing interest in defining and conceptualising social cohesion (Hulse & Stone, 2007; Green et al., 2009; Bottoni, 2018). The intricacy of defining the concept of social cohesion, also related to other concepts, has been the subject of enquiry in a broad spectrum of research (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990; Jenson, 1998; Duhaime, Searles, Usher, Myers & Frechette 2004; Friedkin, 2004; Chan et al., 2006; Oxoby, 2009; OECD, 2012; Cloete, 2014; Mulunga & Yazdanifard, 2014). Schiefer and Van der Noll (2017:579) confirm that the concept of social cohesion and "consensus regarding the theoretical conceptualisation" remain challenging.

Social cohesion is often explained as the "glue that holds society together" (Capshaw, 2005:53; Dekker, 2006; Janmaat, 2011; Cloete, 2014; Carrasco & Bilal, 2016). Although this portrayal offers a bird's eye view of the definition of social cohesion, Gregersen (2013:81) warns that one should recognise the complexity of the concepts and that some views offer "merely a picturesque metaphor that affirms the ontological

realism premise". Social cohesion is generally accepted as a multi-dimensional concept (Jenson, 1998; Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Rajulton, Ravanera & Beaujot, 2007) in which the "influence of the context" and the "complexity of human behaviour" should be taken into account (Bottoni 2018:836).

Research discussions based on factors that draw individuals together towards a cohesive society can be traced back to the writings of Durkheim at the end of the 19th century (Hulse & Stone, 2007; Bottoni, 2018). Durkheim's (1893) theory on social cohesion distinguishes between two systems in social cohesion namely, in the first place, mechanical solidarity which is "similarities amongst individuals sharing values, common horizons of meaning and similar social representations" (Bottoni, 2018:836) or as in Duhaime's description (2004:299), cohesion is "based on family ties and personal, face-to-face relations typical of subsistence-based communities". Durkheim's second system is organic solidarity, which refers to "dissimilarity amongst individuals" (Bottoni, 2018:836) "based on impersonal, abstract social ties typical of more urban and industrial settings" (Duhaime, 2004:299). This view has evolved into an opposing view of the Durkheimian perspective, while recognising the connectedness of individuals in agreement with Bottoni's (2018:836) explanation that "individuals are functionally connected. Each subject carries out a different function (that is the mechanism that produces dissimilarity) making the individuals interdependent. This interconnection produces social cohesion since the individuals are dependent on each other".

By identifying five dimensions in society, Jenson's (1998) contribution formed the groundwork in conceptualising social cohesion (Cloete & Kotze, 2009; Desai, 2015; Bottoni, 2018). The dimensions listed by Jenson (1998) are belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition and legitimacy (cf. Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Jenson's dimensions of social cohesion (Jensen, 1998:15 & 16)

Indicators	Threats
Belonging	Isolation
Inclusion	Exclusion
Participation	Non-involvement
Legitimacy	Illegitimacy

Belonging, or the opposite, "isolation," offered by Bottoni (2018:837) is the "shared values and the presence of a collective identity. Desai (2015:104) describes this dimension as "the experience of solidarity and enjoyment in the immediate community or wider society". Cloete and Kotze (2009:7) add that "in a diverse society such as South Africa, it requires identification with and acceptance of groups". Inclusion or exclusion (Bottoni, 2018:837) deals with the involvement of a member of the society in community activities on "an equal basis" with equal "rights" with "equal access to all life opportunities" (Desai, 2015:104). Participation and the opposite, "non-involvement" (Bottoni, 2018:838), points at the community's active participation in political or social events (Desai, 2015:104) that reflect "respect and tolerance for diversity" (Cloete & Kotze, 2009:7). Recognition and the opposite, "rejection", concerns "respect and tolerance for diversity" (Bottoni, 201:838). It is about accepting and embracing "differences without discrimination" (Desai, 2015:104). Legitimacy and the opposite, "illegitimacy" (Bottoni, 2018:838), refers to maintaining "integrity and social legitimacy" as the way organisations or institutions represent the involved community members (Desai, 2015:104).

Forrest and Kearns (2001:2128) raise the following question: "What might constitute a cohesive society and what are the processes which generate and sustain such cohesion?" To investigate the growth of the cohesive nature of society, they divide social cohesion into four domains, namely common values and a civic culture; social order and social control; social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; social networks and social capital and, lastly, place attachment as an identity. Each of these domains can be described and related to choral performances as context. According to Forrest and Kearns (2001:2129), common values and a civic culture refer to whether the role players in choir competitions share similar "aims and objectives, based on common moral principles and codes of behavior", and whether a support for, as well

as participation in the choral competition institutions (ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous in this study) are evident.

Social order and social control reflect the "absence of general conflict" between groups participating in the competitions (for example religious or cultural differences) and whether there is an "absence of incivility; effective informal social control; tolerance; respect for differences and inter-group cooperation". Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities may indicate whether the role players in these competitions experience equal access to public finances, services and opportunities; an acknowledgement of social obligations and a willingness to assist others. Social networks and social capital indicate whether there is a "high degree of social interaction within" the specific choir competition community, including "civic engagement and associational activity" as well as a "resolution of collective action problems" (Forrest & Kearns, 2001:2128). Place attachment and identity have to do with a "strong attachment to place; the inter-twining of personal and place identity". In this last domain the scope of the study involves the role of an individual's or group's sense of identity in creating social cohesion through participation in either ABC Motsepe or ATKV-Applous, or both.

Berger-Schmitt (2002:406, 412, 414) proposes two "societal goal dimensions" based on the European System of Social Indicators (EUSI). The first is the "inequality dimension". This dimension addresses aspects of social inclusion as well as social exclusion, focusing on "the goal of promoting equal opportunities and reducing disparities and divisions within a society". Bottoni (2018:838) lists three components of Berger-Schmitt's inequality dimension, namely, "regional disparities, equal opportunities and social exclusion". Berger-Schmitt's second "societal goal dimension", the "social capital dimension" has to do with "the goal of strengthening social relations, interactions and ties". The social capital dimension includes "social relations and activities within primary social groups and associations, quality of social relations" as well as the "quality of societal institutions" (Berger-Schmitt, 2002:406, 413, 414).

Bottoni (2018:838) summarises the three components of the social capital dimension named by Berger-Schmitt (2002) as "social relations and activities within primary social

groups and associations, quality of social relations and quality of societal institutions as the three components of the social capital dimension". Bottoni (2018:839) criticises Berger-Schmitt's (2002) two dimensions arguing that these focus on "conditions that can positively affect social cohesion" while failing to consider social cohesion as "an effect of individual attitudes and behaviours". Rajulton et al. (2007) use the term "domain" to specify three main features of social cohesion, namely, the social, political and economic domains. They suggest six "dimensions" that serve as "measurable components of each domain, namely, recognition, belonging, legitimacy, participation, inclusion and equality" (Rajulton et al., 2007:463).

Whelan & Maitre (2005:230–231) distinguish between three levels of social cohesion: a micro-level, referring to the interpersonal strength of ties and trust (as opposed to isolation) between smaller, primary networks in society, which include family and friends; a meso-level, concerned with strength of relations found in a wider scope of the community (secondary groups) including communities within neighbourhoods, the work environment and ethnic groups, and lastly, a macro-level, that involves the formation of a feeling of connectedness within a community, built on shared interpersonal practices and beliefs, tolerance of differences, and competence and legitimation of formal organisations. The idea of the micro and macro levels of social relationships and their important roles in gaining a better understanding of social cohesion is supported by numerous scholars (Berman & Phillips, 2004; Mulunga & Yazdanifard, 2014).

In their study, Chan et al. (2006) discuss various scholars' contributions to the definition of social cohesion. They refer to Berger (1998) and Gough and Olofsson (1999) who investigate "social integration, stability and disintegration" as well as taking into account the limits of social cohesion and considering both "social integration as well as social exclusion" (Chan et al., 2006:275). They proceed with the contribution of Lockwood (1999) who defines social cohesion as a state of strong primary networks (such as kinship and local voluntary organisations) "at communal level" and who suggests some probable indicators of social cohesion (Chan et al., 2006:275–276).

Social psychologists, Bollen and Hoyle (in Chan et al., 2006), offer a significant contribution in clarifying the concept of cohesion, distinguishing between objective

cohesion (the corporative characteristics and purposes of the group as a whole) and perceived cohesion (focusing on the perceptions of individuals within the group). In their own publication, Bollen and Hoyle (1990:482) explain that "[p]erceived cohesion encompasses an individual's sense of belonging to a particular group and his or her feelings or morale associated with membership in the group".

Numerous definitions, seen from a sociological point of view, can be found in the literature. Friedkin (2004:410) explains the group dynamics in social cohesion as follows:

> Groups are cohesive when group-level conditions are producing positive membership attitudes and behaviors and when group members' interpersonal interactions are operating to maintain these group level conditions. Thus, cohesive groups are self-maintaining with respect to the production of strong membership attractions and attachments.

Friendkin (2004:410) proposes the following indicators of social cohesion based on the attitude and behaviour of individuals: 1) attitudes ("their desire or intention to remain in a group"); 2) "identification with or loyalty to a group" and "attitudes about the group or its members"; 3) behaviours ("decisions to sever, weaken, maintain, or strengthen their membership or participation in a group"); 4) receptivity to interpersonal influence, and 5) "commitment and attachment to the group".

Mulunga and Yazdanifard (2014:16) also construe their understanding of social cohesion by considering various interpretations. They conclude that "social cohesion relates to social relationships, their importance, proximity and strength in society and how these are embedded between individuals, groups and place". According to the OECD (2012:51) "a society is 'cohesive' if it 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 social mobility". Berger-Schmitt (2002:405) describes social cohesion as "a characteristic of a society dealing with the connections and relations between societal units such as individuals, groups, associations as well as territorial units. Koonce (2011:145) adds that social cohesion is "the degree of trust members of society have in each other and in society

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itself—their willingness to cooperate with each other, manifested in voluntary actions that are in accordance with social norms".

Shin (2015:45) reasons that "critical points" found in numerous definitions are that social cohesion is an 'ongoing' process … and it can be accomplished upon trust constructed among citizens including mutual understanding, for example". Shin (2015) also underlines the importance, within the context of social cohesion, "to cultivate individuals' capacity for accepting differences (or building tolerance about differences) of social members at multiple levels and then trusting them based on mutual understanding".

Chan et al. (2006) view the concept of social cohesion in two different ways. Firstly, as a framework to develop policies and secondly, to form the basis of exploring cohesion in a social, political and economic context. With regard to the socio-political context referred to by Chan et al. (2006), Carrasco and Bilal (2016:128) highlight the power of social cohesion as change agent for "community mobilization and engagement" in resistance. They explain social cohesion as "a core element of community empowerment that brings community members together to analyze, articulate and demand their human rights and entitlements" and conceptualise social cohesion as "a social process that provides the psychosocial space for group resistance and subversion against oppressive social norms".

Built on a broad spectrum of clarifications of the concept "social cohesion" Chan et al., (2006:298) propose their definition as "a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations". Chan et al. clarify that the concept: "members of society are not limited to individuals; they include also the various groups, organizations as well as institutions that make up a society" (Chan et al., 2006:290). In the definition formulated by Chan et al., vertical interaction refers to "the relationship between the state and society at large", while horizontal interaction refers to "the interactions among different individuals and groups in society" (Chan et al. 2006:290). Bottoni (2018:89) offers a further explanation of Chan et al.'s four dimensions with indicators: "horizontal subjective: general trust with fellow citizens,

willingness to cooperate, sense of belonging; horizontal objective: social participation, voluntarism; vertical subjective: trust in public figures, confidence in political institutions; and vertical objective: political participation" (Chan et al., 2006:290).

Bottini constructs a concept of social cohesion, based on "four pillars", including the views of Bollen and Hoyle (1990), Whelan & Maitre (2005) and Chan et al. (2006). Firstly, a "methodological individualism approach" is followed. This approach focuses on positive ties and interaction between individuals within a society, and acknowledges the "rules and the legitimacy of its institutions" (Bottini 2018:840). The second pillar, based on the definition posed by Chan et al. (2006), focuses on interaction and the strength of ties in society between primary and secondary social networks. This interaction is influenced by attitudes, norms, participation, trust and recognition of a set of rules between institutions and society as a whole (Bottini, 2018). The third pillar is built on levels suggested in a study by Whelan and Maitre in 2005. This perspective includes the micro (relations among individuals), meso (relationships among individuals and groups), and macro (relationships among individuals and society) levels. The fourth pillars integrate two perspectives posed by Bollen and Hoyle in 1990; the subjective or perceived perspective on cohesion (the "attitude and people's state of mind and the objective perspective takes into account the manifestations of behaviours") and the objective perspective on cohesion ("the corporative characteristics and purposes of the group as a whole") (Bottini, 2018:840).

Table 2.2: Bottini's (2018:840) **social cohesion scheme with seven dimensions**

	Subjective influences	**Objective influences**
Micro level of social cohesion	Interpersonal trust Social support	Density of social relations
Meso level of social cohesion	Openness	Participation
Macro level of social cohesion	Institutional trust	Legitimacy of institutions

Compared to Jenson's (1998) dimensions of cohesion, Bottoni (2018) includes participation and legitimacy as posed by Jenson, but excludes belonging and inclusion. For the purpose of this study, the researcher based the discussion of the findings in

chapter 5 on this scheme constructed by Bottoni: belonging (Jenson 1998) situated as a subjective influence at all three levels, and inclusion (Jenson 1998) placed as an objective level relevant to the three levels.

Literature notes numerous positive outcomes that can be attributed as a result of social cohesion, however, includes warnings about the other side of the coin. Kawachi (2006:990–991) warns that cohesion can also result in positive, but also negative outcomes, for example, "resources within tightly knit groups and communities are equally serviceable for the production of social 'bads' as well as goods". Cardo (2014:11) argues that social cohesion can lead to the exclusion of outsiders, and can restrict individual freedom. He further postulates that social cohesion is never a ready-made tool for public policy because it is vague, and that the success of social cohesion depends on the intention and vision of the individual, group or institution advocating it.

2.3 Social cohesion and related concepts

Social cohesion is generally not easy to define and as such, lacks a precise definition (Green et al.,2009; HSRC, 2004). In spite of this concession, there is some consensus that social cohesion is present in societies to the extent that societies are coherent, united and functional, and provide an environment within which its citizens can flourish (HSRC, 2004).

Social cohesion has been associated, and in many instances confused, or used as synonym with related concepts such as social inclusion and social capital (Beauvais & Jenson 2002). The concepts "social cohesion" and "social capital" are often linked or incorrectly used as interchangeable concepts (Cloete 2014). Other related concepts include social inclusion and social justice. In the following sections the researcher explains the concepts "social inclusion" and" social capital" followed by the relation between these two concepts and social cohesion.

2.3.1 Social inclusion

In the wide spectrum of literature reviewed, social inclusion is often linked to economic factors. Social inclusion is a well-known, often informally used, concept. This is confirmed by Oxoby (2009:2) who points out that "the lack of a formal definition for inclusion (and its related concepts) poses significant problems in trying to move research findings into policymaking. Oxoby (2009) clarifies that social inclusion involves "the interrelations between individuals' attitudes and behaviors; it plays a role in developing a coherent framework for understanding social cohesion and investments in social capital" (2009:7).

Social inclusion refers to the influence of individuals' experiences, perceptions, attitudes and behaviour on their place in society (Oxoby, 2009; Klein, 2013; Cloete, 2014). It is about the experiences and perceptions of individuals: "feelings of inclusion or exclusion are strongly based on the manner in which individuals interpret the policies and environment around them (Oxoby, 2009:14). Social inclusion grows where individuals are valued and recognised and "can contribute differently to the creation, regulation and production of social meaning …[thereby] improving the dignity, ability and opportunity regardless the basis of the identity to take part in society" (Mulunga & Yazdanifard, 2014:15).

Financial factors have an influence on social inclusion or exclusion. "Poverty may itself lead to exclusion (as individuals are unable to purchase goods) but may also result in cognitive adaptations which diminish welfare" (Oxoby 2009:9). Oxoby (2009:11) identifies five areas where policies are influenced through social inclusion: access to employment, housing, social protection, health and education. In this study, access to both social protection and education play a role. Social protection includes improving "the management and partnerships distribution agencies and private enterprises". Oxoby (2009:11) stresses the importance of the participation of individuals, specifically the youth, in formal and informal education to foster social inclusion – "[t]he lack of training and education is an important cause of social exclusion" (Oxoby, 2009:11).

Social inclusion is closely related to the concept "identity". According to Emde (2006) a sense of identity starts at a young age and develops throughout life. Emde (2006)

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regards Erik Erikson's explanation of the term "identity" in 1959, as a solid basis for defining the term: a "psychosocial concept, linking the experience of self with others in one's culture. It involves shared meaning … for it expresses a mutual relation and connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (Emde, 2006:609). Social inclusion is also about individuals' understanding of themselves and others and the influence of this understanding on the realisation, or not, of sharing (Bechhofer, 2008:1).

Developing a shared identity among citizens of a certain population will enhance a sense of social inclusion. In this regard, Oxoby (2009) reports on the importance, but also the challenges to consider both inclusion and exclusion. Developing identity inevitably requires differentiation of one group from another and how humans share a social reality given interpersonal differences and individual perceptions and experiences. This is confirmed by Sammut, Daanen and Moghaddam (2013) who postulate that "through social interaction, distinct individuals (subjectivities or subjects) can negotiate between them a reality that suits them". This process serves to create a common and shared reality that incorporates the distinct meanings present for each individual. Korte (2007) describes identity as a cognitive construct of self, that plays a role to distinguish how one relates with others and how they want to be perceived as distinct.

Kuzio (2001) concludes that "when discussing 'our culture' a distinction has to be made between 'us' (the 'self') which is contrasted to the 'other'". Kuzio (2001) argues that language is a crucial element of self-identification and a symbol of one's distinctiveness. Social inclusivity, therefore, relies on "how policies foster identity and influence of belief about oneself and others" (Oxoby, 2009:13). Mulunga and Yazdanifard (2014:15) define social inclusion as "based on briefs of belonging, acceptance and recognition and entails the realization of full and equal participation in economic, social, cultural and political institutions".

2.3.2 Social capital

Definitions provided for social capital and social cohesion in the literature do not seem to be significantly different (Cloete, 2014). Oxoby (2009:5) defines social capital as "an individual's sacrifices (time, effort, consumption) made in an effort to promote cooperation with others". Klein (2013:893) claims that "almost all" definitions of social capital are "explicitly or implicitly developed by individuals to generate some future returns". He explains that this means "social capital is considered as a resource and not just a component of social structures".

According to Cloete (2014:2–3), social capital is not an individual effort "but the sum of the efforts of individuals that participate together in any form of social network to create or build social capital that results in public good or common good, even for those who did not participate". Carrasco & Bilal (2016:129) shed further light on defining social capital:

> Associating capital with societal characteristics and dynamics (trust, norm, and networks) turns these into elements that can be harnessed and possessed. As such, it is impingent on individuals to ensure that they appropriate themselves of capital to advance their goals, including supporting and maintaining health. On the other hand, from a being perspective, social cohesion is a characteristic that can be fostered but that ultimately is vested in a group rather than in the individuals as an individual cannot have social cohesion by herself.

The role that individuals play in fostering social capital is mirrored in Cloete's (2014:3) understanding that "people with values like honesty, trustworthiness, integrity, who care for their fellow humans", are likely to create social capital that could lead to the formation of public good. Langston and Barrett (2008) use the concept "bonding social capital" referring to individuals who form a bond based on a shared purpose, and that this bond can include or exclude individuals in society.

Social capital is divided into three categories, namely, bonding, bridging and linking (Coleman, 1988; Langston & Barrett, 2008; Langston, 2011). The description of bonding in social capital refers to the word "glue" found in many clarifications of both

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the concepts "social capital" and "social cohesion". Thus, bonding in social capital refers to "a kind of sociological superglue holding groups together" (Langston 2011:164). Members of these groups categorised under bonding social capital, are more homogenous than different. Bridging social capital involves connecting people from diverse cultures or other different settings such as socioeconomic class. Linking social capital encompasses the connection between individuals in society in relation to organisations, institutions or people with authority (Langston, 2011). In order to identify the presence of social capital, Langston and Barrett (2008:120) list the following indicators: participation, interaction and civic involvement, networks and connections, families and friends, reciprocity and obligations, trust, norms and values, learning, and membership of faith-based organisations. Social capital can, therefore, be summarised as the behaviour and investment of individuals to promote collaboration based on trust (Dayton-Johnson, 2003; Oxoby, 2009, Klein, 2013; Cloete, 2014).

2.3.3 Social justice

The term "social justice" "seems to be on everyone's lips these days", however, the concept remains challenging to define and there is an absence of consensus on its meaning (Thrift & Sugarman, 2019:1). Various understandings of the concept "social justice" are offered by scholars. According to Hage, Ring and Lantz (2011:2785), social justice is anchored on aspects such as "values of inclusion, collaboration, cooperation, equal access, and equal opportunity". Choir competitions provide opportunity for the development of community of participants involved, thus leading to improved social relations and cooperation. Checkoway (2013) regards community development as an approach to social justice. As such, social justice includes engaging the community, increasing intergroup dialogue, making action plans, and building support for implementation. According to Van den Bos (2003) social justice can be viewed from two perspectives: the rational and the subjective, with the rational promoting the moral reasoning and cognitive process, while the subjective aligns to affective elements. Van den Bos (2003:482) elucidates that "[i]n information-uncertain conditions, people may therefore construct justice judgments by relying on how they feel about the events they have encountered, and justice judgments may hence be strongly influenced by affect information". In this study the researcher follows the line taken by Van den Bos (2003) that the judgement on social justice is dependent on the affective state that people are

in prior to the justice event. Social justice concerns the measure of the extent of fairness and equity in terms of access to and participation in the political, socio-economic and cultural aspects of society (HSRC, 2004:iv).

Since the focus in this research is on choral singing in the school environment, it makes sense to look at the meaning of social justice education. The way in which Hackman (2005:103) clarifies social justice in an educational framework, relates to the idea of transformative learning to encourage learners to take part in the discourse in fostering an awareness and ownership to create an "empowering, democratic, and critical educational environment".

> Social justice education does not merely examine difference or diversity but pays careful attention to the systems of power and privilege that give rise to social inequality, and encourages students to critically examine oppression on institutional, cultural, and individual levels in search of opportunities for social action in the service of social change (Hackman, 2005:104).

Hackman (2005:104–108) identifies five tools that can contribute to the enhancement of social justice: 1) "content mastery" (to obtain "factual information" within the historical context) (2005:104); 2) "critical thinking and the analysis of oppression" (a step further than knowledge of a situation, learners need to be prepared to become "active agents of change and social justice in their lives and communities"; 3) "action and social change" (supporting learners to proceed from experiencing "cynicism and despair" to "hope and possibility"); 4) "personal reflection" (the importance of educators to "reflect critically on themselves and the personal qualities that inform their practice"), and 5) "awareness of multicultural group dynamics" (the ability to "understand group dynamics of the classroom and the socially constructed identities of the teacher and students".

2.3.4 The relation between social cohesion and social inclusion, social capital and social justice

The concepts "social cohesion" and related concepts such as social inclusion, social capital, and social justice are often linked or integrated. In this regard, Oxoby (2009:8) describes the "interrelation" between social inclusion, social capital and social

cohesion by stating that "since greater inclusion positively affects one's incentives to invest in social capital, inclusion is a means of creating greater social cohesion". "Social cohesion is what holds societies together and a key component for social cohesion is social justice" (HSRC, 2004:iv).

Some scholars regard social cohesion as part of the term "social capital", by distinguishing two conceptions within the term "social capital". On the one hand, social capital as network theory pointing at resources "embedded within an individual's social network", and on the other hand, the "social cohesion school of social capital", emphasising social capital as a group attribute (Kawachi, 2006:990). However, Koonce (2011) argues that it is necessary to distinguish between the two concepts since they are closely related, but different.

According to Carrasco & Bilal (2016:128), social capital "was not originally conceptualized as including social cohesion", but later "tightly linked to the concept of social capital". A description by Carrasco & Bilal (2016:129) highlights the link between social capital that develops into social cohesion: "[a] parallel could be drawn with social capital, which is related to possession or ownership (having), and social cohesion, which is a characteristic of a group or society (being)". Klein (2013) claims that there are "strong similarities, but also differences" between social capital and social cohesion and distinguish between the two by explaining social capital as "a micro concept", whereas social cohesion can be considered as "a broader concept than social capital, is a more appropriate concept for macro analysis" (Klein 2013:891). In an economic context, Klein (2013:895) explains social capital as "a result of an investment behaviour" on an "individual level" and social cohesion as "a characteristic of a society or of a community" on a "global level". This can be applied to a social context where social capital refers to the collaboration between individual members of the society based on trust. Social capital involves the individual's contribution (sacrificing time, effort and money) to promote cooperation (Dayton-Johnson, 2003:625). Social capital accumulates to social cohesion, where the society's broader sense of belonging through relationships formed in community activities, further strengthen trust and a belief of people in equal opportunities (Dayton-Johnson 2003; OECD, 2012; Wealth, 2013).

The OECD (2012) reports that social cohesion can be assessed by viewing social inclusion, social capital and social mobility as three interlinked dimensions. Social inclusion refers to the degree to which all individuals in a society enjoy equal access to basic rights and social and economic resources without marginality or exclusion. Social capital concerns the degree of "interpersonal trust and confidence" with various forms of collaboration through "civic engagement"; social mobility is understood as "the degree to which people can or believe they can change their position in society, with equal opportunity, whatever their socio-economic background" (Wealth, 2013:6). Social cohesion involves social relationships and activities that provide "a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility" (OECD, 2012:51). Mulunga and Yazdanifard (2014:19) distinguish between social capital and social cohesion by explaining that "social capital is now widely regarded as a resource that can be derived from social relations and harnessed for building durable social cohesion".

Based on various literature sources, the difference between social inclusion, social capital and social cohesion, as well as the sequence of social inclusion resulting in social capital, followed by social cohesion, is summarised in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Social inclusion, social capital and social cohesion

Social inclusion	Social capital	Social justice	Social cohesion
The influence of individuals' experiences, perceptions, attitudes and behaviour on their place in society (Oxoby, 2009; Klein, 2013; Cloete, 2014).	The behaviour and investment of individuals to promote collaboration, based on trust (Dayton-Johnson, 2003; Oxoby, 2009, Klein, 2013; Cloete, 2014).	To critically examine and measure "the extent of fairness and equity … in society" (South Africa: DAC, 2004:iv) "in search of opportunities for social action in the service of social change" (Hackman, 2005:104).	A broader sense of belonging through social relationships and activities that promotes trust, and offers scope for upward social mobility towards equal opportunities (Dayton-Johnson, 2003; OECD, 2012; Wealth, 2013).

Building on numerous explanations found in the literature, an interpretation of social cohesion, social inclusion, social capital and social justice and their relation to each other, can be explained as follows. Social inclusion refers to individuals and how their experiences and perceptions lead to, or deter social inclusion. Social inclusion leads to social capital, which is a combination of collaborate actions of individuals, resulting in social networking, and building communal wealth. Social justice encompasses a critical view of fairness and equity in society and opportunities for developing social change. Social cohesion includes the entire society wherein relationships and activities determine the growth of solidarity between individuals and groups.

2.4 Culture

An investigation into the role of choir competitions to develop social cohesion in a culturally diverse South African society requires an enquiry into an understanding of the concepts "culture", "cultural and musical identity", "cultural diversity" and "cultural capital". These concepts are discussed in the following sections.

Culture forms an inseparable part of an individual's being and how they interact with the world. In his publication *How Culture Makes Us Human: Primate Social Evolution and the Formation of Human Societies*, Read (2016:30) finds that "kinship is not biological kinship, but rather kinship as it is culturally constructed and based on a conceptual system that enables individuals to compute in a simple manner whether they are kin to one another". This means culture is based on the way individuals interact with others and perceive themselves and others. Referring to Semiotic Cultural Psychology Theory (SCPT) Mannarini and Salvatore (2019:31) describe culture as an "ongoing process of sense-making" through "processes of interpretation that shape the experience of individuals and social behaviours". They add that "culture as sense-making can help to account for diversity in response to diversity, and also to detect patterns of response that transcend social groups and categories (Mannarini & Salvatore, 2019:34). Culture, therefore, forms an important part of the way in which humans make sense of themselves in relation to the world they find themselves in.

This echoes the interpretation by Gupta and Bhugra (2009) who state that we absorb culture automatically through exposure to various sources such as parents, family, arts

and folk tales. "This process goes on throughout most of our lifetime. Culture not only influences our cognitive schema but also moulds the way we think of ourselves and how we see others seeing us" (Gupta & Bhugra, 2009:333). Yosso (2005:75) defines the term "culture" as, "the behaviors and values that are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people".

The complexity of the concept "culture" is acknowledged by many scholars and the definitions present numerous variations (Smith & Riley, 2011; Marx, 2015; Kashima, Bain & Perfors, 2019). The intricacy and extensiveness of the concept can be seen in the different perspectives offered in the definition of the term "cultural" in the Merrian-Webster online dictionary: "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time; the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution or organization; the set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic; the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations; enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training and acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills".

The term "culture" is clearly not confined to the field of arts, but a multi-faceted concept involving all facets of society (Smith & Riley, 2011). UNESCO (2001:n.p.) defines culture as "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". It is noted that "culture is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity" and "social cohesion". Another explanation by UNESCO (2009(b):2) describes culture as a "repository of knowledge, meanings and values that permeate all aspects of our lives; culture also defines the way human beings live and interact both at local and global scales". The organisation lists eight characteristics of culture:

> 1) A source of identity, innovation, and creativity. 2) A set of distinctive spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group.
> 3) A complex web of meanings, relationships, beliefs, and values that frame

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people's relationship to the world. 4) Acquired through the process of cultivation and improvement of the individual, especially by means of education. 5) An evolving dynamic force relevant to all societies, local or global. 6) Influenced by and in turn influences world-views and expressive forms. 7) Located in a time and a place. While culture in the abstract is a set of mental constructs, it is rooted in a place at a moment in history and is always local. 8) A renewable resource if it is carefully nurtured for it to grow and flower. When neglected, it is easily lost or destroyed (UNESCO 2009(b):2).

Marx (2015:16) describes culture as "a communal way of life, in other words, a life shared with other people". Emde (2006:606) confirms culture as consisting of "shared beliefs, attitudes, and values, as well as practices that bring to life shared meaning through daily interactions of people within the group". He adds that these practices are "more than temporary and are transmitted across generations" (Emde, 2006:606). Joseph (2014) emphasises that culture's inherent value, its contribution to society, and its symbiotic relationship with teaching and learning are key elements in any given society. Howard (2020) clarifies culture as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group" and second, as "the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends on the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations" (Howard, 2020:69).

Emde (2006:607) maintains that culture is "transactional and dynamic" and is experienced "subjectively". His explanation of how the "shared meaning of culture" adapts and changes according to the development of society, technology and events, strengthens the idea that choir competitions can play a role in changing perceptions in a cultural context. He explains that culture "operates silently as well as with voices" (Emde, 2006:607). This means that the meaning added to culture is influenced by daily communication, for example, by parents as well as cultural experiences that can guide perceptions. The dynamic and changing nature of culture is also seen in the definition by Kashima et al. (2019). They conceptualise culture as "the set of socially transmittable information in a population, which can influence cognition, affect, and behavior. This includes ideas and practices and can be represented in the brain and body as well as in the artefacts produced by people" (Kashima et al., 2019:500). Schwarzenthal, Schachner, Juang and Van de Vijver. (2019) confirm that culture changes and develops and that an individual or a group's culture can be influenced by

other cultures. "Culture is shared by a collective of people, such as a nation, a generation, or a social class. People usually only adopt their collective's culture to a certain degree, and often adopt elements of more than one culture" (Schwarzenthal et al., 2019:324). This resonates with the choice of choral repertoire as well as performance trends that constantly change and evolve, and are influenced by interaction with other choirs and their performances.

The South African Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) views the concept "culture" as the dynamic totality of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features which characterise a society or social group. It includes the arts and letters, modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions, heritage and beliefs upheld over the years (South Africa, 2017:67). According to Mpisi (2010) these expressions and rights have not been enjoyed by all South Africans. He further postulates that the cultural heritage of subdominant groups and their history, perceptions, and achievements were undermined contributing to the devolution of their specific cultures. To conclude, Mpisi (2010) argues that culture is its owners' inherent and indispensable wealth.

2.4.1 Cultural and musical identity

We live in an era of conflicting identities. Kim (2007) states that although communication, technology and transport systems bring nationalities from various cultures in closer contact, division seem to be prevalent.

> Paradoxically, the very forces that diminish physical, social, and cultural boundaries exacerbate group rivalries, rendering a deeply fractious and unsettling landscape of today's world. The seemingly innocent banner of cultural identity is now a compelling sore spot galvanizing many into ''us-against-them'' posturing (Kim, 2007:249–250).

Across social science discipline research, cultural identity is a universal and widely debated concept (Flache & Macy, 2006). Numerous scholars acknowledge Erik Erickson's pioneering work on cultural identity since 1950 (Kim, 2007; Syed, 2018). Kim (2007) summarises Erickson's understanding of cultural identity as "the process of identity development as one in which the two identities of the individual and of the

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group are merged into one … cultural identity (is placed) at the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his or her 'common culture'" (Kim, 2007:240). While one group may share a common culture, or shared identity, it differs from other cultural identities. In a cultural context, the concepts "self" and "other" refer to an own identity (self) with characteristics, other than the identity of another individual or group (other) (Sharma, 2014). To be able to interpret the world and engage with society, an understanding of one's own identity plays a role in how one cooperates and interacts with society (Gupta & Bhugra, 2009; Catmur, Cross & Over, 2016).

> Core questions in human social cognition, such as how we use our own experience to understand the experience of others, and how we understand the ways in which we are connected to others, tap into a key construct that transcends disciplinary boundaries: namely, the understanding of the relationship between self and other (Catmur et al., 2016:1).

Gupta and Bhugra (2009) maintain that a sense of identity (that includes cultural identity) has a crucial influence on interpersonal relationships and that people are defined by culture (for example social behaviour, religion or arts). Cultural identity in a culturally diverse society can both present challenges as well as offer benefits to a community (UNESCO,2009(a):16).

> Cultural identity, its preservation and differences, especially in a multicultural setting and in a globalizing world can potentially bring about conflicts and contribute to mental health problems. Appreciating cultural identities and their uniqueness in the patients by their clinicians can at the same time hold a key to understanding and overcoming prejudices (Gupta & Bhurga, 2009:333).

Music is one way to formulate and express identity, since it provides "a fundamental channel of communication: it provides a means by which people can share emotions, intentions and meanings even though their spoken languages may be mutually incomprehensible" (Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald, 2002:1). Expressing identity through choral singing leads to an inquiry on the nature of musical identity and the role it plays in fostering social cohesion. Two forms of musical identity play a role in the development of musicians, including choir practitioners: identities in music and

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music in identities (Hargreaves et al., 2002; Einarsdottir, 2012). Identities in music deal with how individuals define themselves as musician. Experiences in a person's family or music tuition have an influence on how individuals position themselves "within the culturally defined roles" as choral singer, conductor or adjudicator (Einarsdottir, 2012:37). Music in identities refers to using music as resource to serve a purpose wider than the individual in developing other facets of our personal identities, such as national, cultural or ethnic identities (Einarsdottir, 2012). It is this last form (music in identity) that plays a direct role in the way individuals' participation in choral singing may lead to nation-building and cohesion in society.

The British programme, Sing Up,[6] advocates that singing in learners is very important for its ability to strengthen the identity of the school and make pupils proud of being part of it (Welch, Himonides, Papageorgi, Saunders, Rinta, Stewart, Preti, Lani, Vraka & Hill, 2009). The report further elucidates that successful schools are known for strong cohesive cultural programmes for learning that are supported with enthusiasm. Samama (2012:84–85) reinforces that choral music is "the voice of regional cultural identity" and refers to the multiplicity of multinational entities created to support choral music initiatives. Haecker (2012:27) remarks that "[f]or both Black and White South Africans, music is a symbol of identity … a means of retrieving, expressing, and preserving culture. This process of establishing identity … be it individual, communal, or national … involves balancing the notions of difference with similarity within the context of shared experiences" (Haecker, 2012: 27). Building on these views, Haecker (2012:27) postulates that "[a] discussion of musical identity, either Western or African, is ineffective and incomplete when separated from the cultural and social context with which it is identified" (2012:27).

It can be concluded from the above attestations that music has a potential role to play in enhancing the embracement of own and others' cultural identity as well as a broader national identity leading to solidarity in society. This can be harnessed to heal

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[6] Sing Up is a British based limited company which operates on a mission-driven not-for-profit basis. Their core goal is to ensure that learners and young people have opportunities to sing regularly and well for all the benefits that research shows bring. They place singing at the heart of every educational setting by providing a complete singing package through a digital music platform. This company has a database of learners who sing from pop to classical, specially arranged to promote good vocal health in young voices.

the divisions and mistrust among communities in South Africa, resulting in the achievement of national reconciliation and healing from the divisions of the past. This was confirmed by the South African Minister of Education, Angie Motshega, when she stated that choral music upholds unity in diversity, national reconciliation, social cohesion and a national identity among young South Africans of school-going age and that it can play a role of addressing deep rooted cultural, traditional, and indigenous division to breed as sense of belonging, and definition of South African national identity (South Africa, 2014:n.p.). Van As (2012:72) reiterates that "… opportunities to allow ordinary citizens to sing songs which promote healing, hope and unity in choirs could facilitate singers to embrace a more wholesome South African identity".

2.4.2 Cultural diversity

We live in an increasingly diverse world where we constantly need to adapt to changes (Flache & Macy, 2006). This is confirmed in the book, *The brave new world of education*, (Slabbert, De Kock, Hattingh, 2009:vii) in which the authors state that South Africans are "living in a country that is going through a major process of dramatic societal change" and that educators find themselves – internationally as well as in South Africa – in a "complex, multidimensional and continuously changing educational context". This reality of dealing with change in an increasingly diverse world is noticeably also relevant in the choral landscape. Challenges related to racial and cultural diversity is not only paramount in South Africa, but evident in an "ever-increasing ethnic and cultural diversity worldwide" (Van As, 2009:2).

While globalisation has led to greater responsiveness to diversity, it does "in no way guarantee the preservation of cultural diversity, it has helped to give the topic greater visibility" (UNESCO, 2009(a):4). Where cultural diversity has previously been viewed as a "fixed concept", the "dynamic nature and the challenges of identity associated with the permanence of cultural change" is now increasingly taken into account (UNESCO, 2009(a):5).

The ideals of cultural diversity can be described as "the capacity to maintain the dynamic of change in all of us, whether individuals or groups, their values or world

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views are universal and adopt an expansionist approach towards those who do not (or do not yet) share them" (UNESCO, 2009(a):4–5). Munro and Stevens (2008:42) explain multiculturalism as "… the meeting of different societies and their cultures, ideas, customs, religions and art". Lissard and Van As (2014:99) regard the concept "multicultural" as responding to and embracing "all the cultures found within a community" in an "unprejudiced" way with regard to "cultural and religious diversity". Rosado (1996:2) describes multiculturalism as follows:

> The new orientation for the future … a starting point to better clarify our human interactions, a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society.

Rosado (1996) dissects the definition into "four plus one" elements: (1) "beliefs and behaviors", (2) "recognizes and respects", (3) "acknowledges and values", (4) "encourages and enables". He adds the element of (5) "empowerment", which he explains as a process of enabling people to be self-critical of their own biases to strengthen themselves and others to achieve and deploy their maximum potential.

Cultural diversity presents challenges as well as benefits to society. On the one hand, "intercultural encounters between individuals, communities and peoples invariably involve a certain cultural tension, whose terms depend on the context in which they occur and the value systems brought into play" (UNESCO, 2009(a):42). On the other hand, "freeing ourselves of stereotypes and prejudices in order to accept others with their differences and complexities" empowers cultural diversity to become "a resource, benefitting cultural intellectual and scientific cooperation for development and the culture of peace" (UNESCO, 2009(a):5). Munro and Stevens (2008:51) argue that "in a genuinely multicultural world, different cultures must be revived, maintained, must be a choice for the members of that culture, and should not be lost in a homogenized, single, globalised 'world' culture".

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2.4.3 Cultural capital

The term "cultural capital" was introduced in 1973 by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron in a paper, "Cultural reproduction and social reproduction" and further developed by Bourdieu (Cole, 2019). Cultural capital can be explained as "the accumulation of knowledge, behaviors, and skills that a person can tap into to demonstrate one's cultural competence and social status (Cole, 2019:n.p.). It can, therefore, be concluded that the knowledge and skills that an individual holds to perform folk songs from a specific culture is one example of cultural capital.

Goulding (2008) postulates that cultural capital is a sociological concept linked to social inequality and social position, and is often described as a set of cultural competencies which a person needs to acquire to participate in a whole range of cultural activities – those activities regarded as "high culture" or "taste" such as the visual arts, literature, music and theatre. Andersen and Jaeger (2015:179) suggest that cultural capital exist through "linguistic competence, mannerisms, cultural knowledge, objectified (cultural goods, pictures, books, etc.), and institutionalized (educational) credentials". Jeannotte (2003:38) states that, cultural capital involves the "disposal of taste" or "consumption of specific cultural forms that mark people as members of specific classes". Goulding (2008:24) refers to Bourdieu who distinguishes between three different types of cultural capital: firstly, embodied, secondly, objectified and thirdly, institutionalised. The embodied form refers to "cultural skills" (knowledge, tastes, dispositions, etc.) which are informally acquired through "immersion in a world of cultivated people, practices and objects". Objectified cultural capital relates to cultural objects or goods such as works of art, literature, music and films, while institutionalised cultural capital is that which is socially or institutionally recognised, most often understood as academic qualifications (Goulding, 2008). In this study, the focus is on objectified cultural capital (for example, folk songs from cultures performed by choirs).

2.4.4 Cultural transmission

Kashima et al. (2019:501) propose three processes of cultural dynamics that can be applied to one way of transmitting culture in the choral milieu: firstly, how new cultural information is introduced to a population, secondly, how it is transmitted, and thirdly,

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how its prevalence changes. One way of introducing cultural information that has not previously existed or has been available to a population, is invention. An example is the creation of new choir compositions expanding the existing choral repertoire. Obtaining choral music from other than own sources (for example international catalogues, or requesting commissioned works) link to what Kashima et al. (2019:501) call "importation" of "cultural information". The phenomenon of new choral composition where elements of African music are included, can be linked to what Kashima et al. (2019) describe as "inventive psychological processes" resulting from "combining existing cultural ideas and practices" (Kashima et al., 2019:501).

After cultural information has been introduced, social transmission of cultural information takes place. Cultural information (such as music compositions, arrangements of folk songs[7] and indigenous African songs) and performance practices such as adding choreography, instrumental accompaniment or dramatization of songs, are introduced to audiences and other performers, and then transmitted to other individuals and groups. A rich way of the transmission of cultural information is interaction where a cultural bearer or group interact with another group to share their culture by teaching them songs and performance ideas. Kashima et al.'s (2019) account on "vertical (from parents to their offspring), oblique (from one generation to the next without a genetic relationship), and horizontal (within the same generation)" transmission is visible in existing choral practices. Examples of Kashima et al.'s (2019) explanation of cultural transmission in a choral environment includes the way in which parents, or older generations, are sometimes invited to interact with choirs during rehearsals and to teach songs, or children in the choir who accept the role of teaching folk songs from their own culture to peers.

Kashima et al. (2019:501) explain that cultural information is transmitted to different groups or generations within the population and that "the proportion of people who use

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[7] Folk music refers to a "body of songs, tunes and dances that have been handed down from generation to generation and accepted in several different versions … as part of the oral tradition of a region, nation or people" (Ingles & Keeffe, 1990:186). "Folk music, like folk literature, lives in oral tradition; it is learned through hearing rather than reading. It is functional in the sense that it is associated with other activities, and it is primarily rural in origin (Nettl:n.d.). Interchangeable terms used for folk music include indigenous music, and world music or musics (Van Aswegen & Potgieter, 2010:51).

it at a given point in time" differs. Kashima et al. (2019:501) use the term "cultural drift" referring to these "prevalence changes due to random fluctuations".

In a choral setting, this could refer to the need of certain repertoire or assistance of people to accompany a choir, or to share cultural songs. Based on Kashima et al.'s (2019) view, trends in repertoire can be regarded as one form of cultural information. For example, an increasing need for African folk songs to be performed as part of competition programmes. If a need arises for cultural information (for example arrangements of African songs for choirs to adapt to prescriptions of the programme choirs need to perform), the "benefits" of the information is strengthened and "its use is likely to be reinforced and the likelihood of its future reuse increases" (Kashima et al., 2019:501). On the other hand, if it involves costs (as is the case with hiring instrumental accompanists, purchasing arrangements of African folk song or hiring specialist to assist choirs in performing the songs) "the likelihood of its future use is reduced" (Kashima et al., 2019:501).

Apart from having the privilege of being able to visit a cultural society and be exposed to their music and learn their songs, one of the best ways to transfer cultural music knowledge is through a person (also referred to as a culture bearer) who shares his or her indigenous music. Joseph (2014:24) confirms that the "wealth of knowledge and skills of indigenous culture bearers" plays an important role in transmission of or sharing of African indigenous music. She continues to argue that "such sharing provides culture bearers the opportunity to transmit much needed skills that are not often offered by academics" (Joseph, 2014:25). In this way, both choir and culture bearer are enriched in the process of sharing and receiving cultural capital.

When culture bearers share folk song with groups from other cultures, powerful pathways are opened to strengthen cohesion. This can be seen in the three stages when transmission of cultural information takes place (Kashima et al., 2019:504). The first stage, production, refers to where the knowledge that the culture bearers hold, comes from. Folk music is transmitted from generation to generation (Van Aswegen & Potgieter, 2010). Kashima et al. (2019:504) explain that "production is constrained by the accessibility of cultural information in the sender's memory and to be able to recall the memory of this cultural information "subprocesses of cultural transmission are

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included in the task structure". Secondly, the production phase is followed by the "grounding" stage. This refers to a mutual understanding between the cultural bearer and the individual or group receiving the cultural information. It involves motivation, engaging of the giver and receiver resulting into "the status of shared reality" (Kashima et al., 2019:504). The last phase, "interpretation", involves the receiver's understanding and way of performance of the transmitted cultural information.

Choirs that invite culture bearers to share their folk music with them provide a meaningful example of what Kashima et al. (2019: 513) refer to as "collectivism". Collectivism is clarified as "the cultural practice of partner selection" or "what type of people are selected as a partner of social interaction with whom one cooperates" (Kashima et al. 2019: 513). Kashima et al. (2019:513) argue that collectivism serves as a "mechanism of assortment that can help sustain cooperation".

In a South African context, most school choir competitions involve the performance of folk music from different cultures. To ensure that singing the music of others serve the purpose of enhancing cohesion between diverse cultures, Howard (2020) emphasises the importance of understanding the difference between "cultural appropriation" versus "cultural appreciation" (Howard, 2020:69). She cautions that a lack of understanding the difference can harm relationships between different cultures and lead to social bias that includes prejudice, discrimination and racism.

In order to gain a better understanding of cultural appreciation, it is meaningful to first unpack the opposite: cultural appropriation. Howard (2020:69) defines cultural appropriation as a way of disrespecting other cultures by using their traditional music ("cultural expressions ... or artifacts") without permission or clear guidance regarding the context of the music or the way it should be performed. The task of engendering cultural appreciation lies on the shoulders of the music or choral educator (conductor) to establish "reflective practice" for conductor and singers and to "demonstrate a multicultural sensitivity toward others in response to thoughts and emotions that are provoked through their musical experiences" (Howard, 2020:70).

2.5 The value of choral singing

"Men sang out their feelings long before they were able to speak their thoughts."
Otto Jespersen

Singing is a primal and universal human expression (Huron, 2001; Wallin, 2001). Elmer (2001:13) describes singing as "the earliest and universal musical expression". This is confirmed by Gorzelańczyk and Podlipniak (2011:79) stating that "singing is a primitive way of music realization previous to any kind of instrumental music, probably older than speech". Welch (2005:1) supports this notion explaining that "human vocalisation is multi-faceted, contains key essences of our musical development and fosters our earliest abilities to communicate musically". He continues that the "commonality, plurality and development" of singing "distinguish the (human) species" (Welch 2005:2). Koopman (1999:n.p.) confirms that "[s]inging, the vocal production of musical tones, is so basic to man; its origins are long lost in antiquity and predate the development of spoken language".

The general benefits of choral singing are widely claimed (Tonneijck, Kinébanian & Josephsson, 2008; Sandgren, 2009; Hallam, 2010; Gick, 2011; Livesey, Morrison, Clift & Camic, 2012; Welch, 2012; Johnson, 2013; Bonshor, 2014; Sanal & Gorsev, 2014; Vârlan, 2016; Barrett, 2017; Batt-Rawden, 2017; Moss, Lynch & O'Donoghue, 2018). Stewart and Lonsdale (2016:1240) claim that there is "a growing interest in the idea that singing in a choir might have significant positive psychological effects for individuals". Clift and Hancox (2010) confirm the health benefits that are recognised by many Western cultural groups. Boer and Abubakar (2014) report on the positive influence of music on human well-being, acknowledged by researchers, including ethnomusicologists and anthropologists. Joseph and Southcott (2014:126) also link the contribution of choral singing to well-being, optimism and healthy living. Livesey et al. (2012) suggest that singing in choirs improves some professionals by relieving their pressures and improving attitudes about life. Reports on the contribution of singing to improving health is also evident in literature. Welch (2012:1) states that singing has a "respiratory aerobic activity", which improves oxygen intake in the body. According to Livesey et al. (2012:11–12) choral events have the potential of "building

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friendships, improving bonding and co-operation, nation-building and social transformation". These scholars indicate that group singing can accrue ''social capital'', yielding trust and reciprocity amongst participating role players. Livesey et al. (2012:11) conclude that "high social capital is associated with fewer common mental health problems".

The educational contribution of choral singing in schools, which includes development reaching further than music, is largely recognised (Saunders, Papageorgi, Himonides, Vraka, Rinta & Welch 2012; Iwasaki, Rasinski, Yildirim & Zimmerman 2013; Ferrer, 2018; Tracy, 2018). Choral singing in schools plays a significant role in the development of learners, in various non-musical areas, including intellectual development (Ehrlin, 2016). Educational benefits derived from choral singing, namely, intellectual development, language proficiency, and reading skills have been noted in the literature (Welch, 2012). There is evidence that the academic achievement of learners participating in choirs is enhanced and that learners who sing in choruses achieve significantly better grades in subjects such as English language, arts, and mathematics (Chorus America, 2009).

Choral singing can motivate learners who struggle to read, and can develop an interest in reading and writing (Iwasaki et al., 2013). Singing also complements traditional teaching, which often fails to address the diverse ways of learning by other learners (Iwasaki et al., 2013). Therefore, in the educational setting, choral singing is a platform that avails alternative ways of reaching success through a channel that enriches and brings variety to the learning environment. Ferrer et al. (2018) assert that choral singing plays an important role in the advancement of learners' intellectual and moral faculties. Ehrlin (2016) advocates that group music activities, such as choral singing, at school create a sense of togetherness and high aspiration to work together in the learning process. Both researchers (Ehrlin 2016; Ferrer et al., 2018) confirm that singing in a choir in the educational environment calls for a certain demeanour from participants, taught and led by the teacher, which essentially positions choral activities as a platform that has the ability to complement the educational role played by the school. Developing all these abilities through singing demonstrates that the participation of learners in choral singing contributes to their holistic growth and development and may play a role in fostering social connectedness and cohesion. Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010)

claim that schools are key places where social cohesion can be fostered, and it is for this reason that learners should be taught to regards schools as places where all races meet and feel at home. Considering various research indicating the value of choral singing – specifically in educational institutions – schools can be considered as a valuable platform for fostering social cohesion through singing. Choral music in this respect is one of the channels that can help learners realise cohesion.

2.6 Global interest in choral singing

Participation in choral singing is greatly supported globally (Walker, 2005; Chorus America, 2019). Tonneijck et al. (2008:173) confirm that "[s]inging in a choir is a leisure occupation that is performed worldwide by millions of people in different cultures and under different circumstances". Livesy et al. (2012:10) are of the opinion that "choral singing is the most common form of active participation in music-making" and "that community choirs and choral societies are found in most towns and cities across the UK".

Choral singing is a well-supported cultural activity worldwide. The international outlook on choral music covered in the literature presents a picture showing choral music as a platform that involves people from all regions as they interact and share their diverse heritages.

Choral singing can be one of the most powerful unifying forces between nations (Barrett 2008; Van As, 2010; Brüggemann & Kasekamp, 2014; King, 2017). Clift et al. (2010) confirm this by referring to the growing membership of "the International Federation for Choral Music [IFCM] that is recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)", "and a thriving tradition of choral singing in the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden and Finland".

The support that choral singing enjoys worldwide is confirmed by Tonneijck, Kinébanian and Josephsson (2008:173):

> Singing in a choir is a leisure occupation that is performed worldwide by millions of people in different cultures and under different circumstances. Choral singing requires collaborative action and can be viewed as a social phenomenon.

Clift et al. (2010) refer to a study by Bell (2004) reporting that "23.5 million American adults participate in choral singing on a weekly basis" and conclude that "more Americans participate in choral singing than in any other form of artistic activity" (Clift et al., 2010:3). Livesey et al. (2012:10) confirm that "countries in northern Europe tend to have a strong choral tradition". Einarsdóttir and Gudmundsdottir (2016:39) report that "[s]inging plays an important role in the social life of Icelanders" and that there is a "lively" choral tradition in Iceland. Einarsdóttir (2012:22) regards choral singing as "probably the most widespread form of art performance, especially in Western countries, where it provides an opportunity for ordinary people to participate in creating music without the requirements of formal music education". Stewart and Lonsdale (2016:1241) report that the "perceived well-being benefits [of choral singing] are arguably most clearly reflected in the growing popularity of singing in choirs".

2.7 South African interest in choral singing

Not only globally, but also in South Africa, people are known for their enthusiastic participation in choirs across a wide spectrum of cultures. Several research studies indicate that choral music is a prosperous recreational activity that attracts participation of a broad spectrum of almost all communities in South Africa (Detterbeck, 2002; Van der Walt, 2004; Van Aswegen, 2006; Hammond, 2004; Van As, 2009; De Beer & Shitandi, 2012; Haecker, 2012). Van der Walt reports that "with the years, choral singing has become the culturally most pursued activity in South Africa. Choral music is one of the dynamic forces in South African music "(Van der Walt, 2004:19). Van As (2009) regards the South African choral scene as lively and ever-improving. Hammond (2004:103) agrees that "South Africa has a vibrant and well-developed choral music scene that incorporates many musical genres and is evident in most, if not all, sectors of South African society". De Beer and Shitandi (2012) report that

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choral music is probably the musical activity in which most people on the continent participate either as amateurs or as semi-professionals.

In South African schools, choral events are revered as an important phenomenon that can contribute to national reconciliation and social cohesion (South Africa, 2017). The current Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motsekga (South Africa, 2016:n.p.), in an address, described school choral music as a platform that can be used to realise

> … our quest to promote unity in diversity, national reconciliation, social cohesion and a national identity among young South Africans of school-going age … by addressing embedded cultural, traditional and indigenous meanings to nation-building, sense of belonging, and definition of a South African national identity.

Barrett (2008) reports that choral singing in South Africa involves all ethnic groups with the exception of the Indian group who, according to Barrett, are not known for choral singing. Van As (2009) remarks that the Nguni (Ndebele, Xhosa, Swati and Zulu), the Sotho (Southern Sesotho (Basotho), Northern Sotho (Bapedi) and Batswana) have been "musicking" long before the colonial era. She further suggests that choral singing is prevalent among the White populations and concludes that "the general choral scene in South Africa is a lively and ever-improving one" (Van As, 2009:11).

2.8 Choral singing and the South African socio-political background

The socio-political background is mirrored in the history and nature of the South African choral environment.

> Colonial intervention and intercultural exchange triggered a crucial encounter between African societies and the Western world that had a lasting effect on all spheres of life, resulting in growing class differentiations and the emergence of class-based cultural practices … (Detterbeck, 2002:3)

This gave rise to social alienation and divisions among communities (Detterbeck,

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2002:2) leading to the need for "self-introspection by the converted", and necessitating the development of a "rising tide of anti-colonial sentiment in South Africa". This development led to a new move of self-repositioning and recovery of identity. It included moving away from dependency to self-awareness. According to Detterbeck (2002), musicians from black cultures initiated a new way of dealing with music such as composing music that brought both European and African elements into perspective. Detterbeck (2002) reports on resistance when some converts started defying instructions from the missionaries to stop singing hymns by insisting on performing music in their African ways. Olwage (2003:108) states the following:

> As the revolutionary practices of South Africa's black secessionist churches are figured in their musical resistance to the mission's musical revelations, so the story of black musicking becomes a metonym for the Comaroffs' history as they follow the Tswana along their passage down the road from revelation to revolution.

According to De Beer and Shitandi (2012:186), this resistance included alteration of hymns into new African choral styles, which included bringing in African practices, such as "language, parallel movement between voices, responsorial elements, and rhythmic alteration, through the inclusion of dances or instrumental accompaniments". Haecker (2012:1) refers to these changes as "musical integration", while Detterbeck (2002":i) uses the term, *Amakwaya* (isiZulu word for the "tradition and performance practice of choirs in South Africa"). This, according to Detterbeck (2002), resulted in a hybrid of Western and African elements.

The context in which the history of choral music in South Africa took place reflects a troubled milieu of racial divisions and fragmentation. Haecker (2012:10) reports that "choral music … in South Africa provided a means of fostering segregation". According to the Department of Education (South Africa, 2000:2), school music competitions and/or festivals were historically organised based on racial and cultural separation, with Black schools mainly concentrating on singing and White schools on instrumental music. In the Black communities these competitions were driven by teachers' associations.

[U]until the late-eighties to the early-nineties, the Natal African Teachers Union (NATU) and the Transvaal United African Teachers Associations (TUATA), both affiliates of the National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), and former homeland teachers' associations such as Transkei Teachers Association (TTA) and Bophuthatswana Teachers Associations (BTA) organised their school music competitions separately (South Africa, 2000:2).

Regarding the long history of divisions in choral practices among races, especially Black and White, Bouwer (2009:1) refers to "stained communication between races" resulting into "distrust … segregation between black and white" that led to "distinctly separate choral styles". Choirs in South Africa played a crucial role in bringing the outside world's attention to the apartheid system. Bloodgood and Deane (2005:8) express the role of protests songs in South Africa as follows:

Most scholars have found that protest songs had their greatest impact in the transformation of individuals' attitudes and beliefs. Whether it was identifying themselves as laborers, black women, or South African, music helped to change their self-images and create communities.

Protest singing has been part of socio-political protest worldwide (Power, 2014; Gilbert, 2007; Schmidt, 2014; Mugo, 2010). Examples of such choral songs are *Bawo tixo somandla* by Mxolisi Matyila[8] and *Sikhalela Izwe Lakithi*[9] (composer unknown). Choral music can contribute to the restoration of socio-political challenges faced by society, as was demonstrated in other parts of the world. In Estonia, singing became an exponential contributor to the restoration of peaceful reforms in what became known as the Singing Revolution in the 1990s (Schmid, 2014:n.p.). In South Africa, music related to singing together with other cultural forms, was used to garner international support for the struggle against apartheid (Gilbert, 2007).

Although there is negative expression around the early inception of choral music as seen in the above reports, such as resistance, defiance by way of using African

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[8] isiXhosa folk song. (Translation: Father, God Almighty).
[9] isiZulu folk song. (Translation: We cry for our land).

rhythms in hymns, scholars such as Haecker (2012) regard these as developments that ushered in a new South African democratic order. Haecker (2012) further reflects that much of the music composed for school choir singing in South Africa continues to reflect a mixture of both African and European musical elements. These developments are also reflected in the music of other Southern African countries such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Lesotho (Haecker, 2012).

2.9 Choral singing from an African perspective

Reports on the history of choral music in Southern Africa are led by researchers such as Detterbeck (2002), De Beer (2007), De Beer and Shitandi (2012) and Haecker (2012). They report on how choral music was introduced in sub-Saharan Africa and how it continues to evolve. Before the arrival of the missionaries, song and dance were used as a means of communication with the young about family life, customs and practices (Detterbeck, 2002). De Beer and Shitandi (2012) refer to a choral tradition in Africa long before colonisation. They postulate that the African style of singing based on homophony or polyphony was demonstrated by communities such as the *Ijesha* (the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria), the Nguni of Tanzania, the amaZulu, the amaXhosa, and the amaSwati of South Africa. De Beer (2007) argues that group singing has been as much a part of indigenous Africa as it has been through history for all other cultures. However, the choral music of today is mainly the product of Europe and America, also referred to as" cross-cultural values", which led to the formulation of a new form of traditional or folk music (De Beer, 2007:54).

Although choir singing was ad hoc in the early stages and mainly organised in the urban areas (Detterbeck 2002), De Beer and Shitandi (2012:186) conclude that Africans easily adopted these Western choral traditions of making music. Missionaries introduced singing in a Western music style to promote Christianity and to educate (De Beer, 2007:52). Detterbeck (2002) postulates that Western choral music was introduced in Southern Africa in three processes, firstly, through coercion of Black communities' missionaries to leave their own ways and adopt the Western way of singing from a book of simple hymns, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. These hymns were used regularly in church services, school assemblies and music lessons. Secondly, Western music was introduced through using revival hymns which were based on

simple harmonic devises with three basic chords (I), (IV) and (V) (primary chords) as another way of singing hymns. The third process was the expansion and sustenance of Christian networks, which included spreading the European cultural values among the converted.

The "traditional [African] music and dance" were replaced with "European hymns in four-part harmony" (Detterbeck, 2002). Choral music from Europe was disseminated through simple hymns in the form of Genevan psalter, Calvinist hymns and simple Dutch folksongs called *liederwysies*[10], which were mainly unaccompanied and in sacred texts (Heacker, 2012). (Heacker, 2012) also points out that the Dutch settlers' movement into the interior and away from the Cape coast resulted in the sharing of these hymns with the indigenous people.

From these developments it became easy for elements of Western music to swiftly infiltrate and alter some of the indigenous attributes related to African music. Examples are "rhythmic complexity, pentatonic or modal tonality, overlapping call-and-response forms, percussive quality, and melodic inflections dictated by African speech-tones, which characterised traditional African song" (Haecker, 2012:11). These changes included hymn characteristics, simplified rhythms, altered tonality to reflect major tonalities, three or four-part homophonic texture as well as modified African speech-tones to fit the syllabification and stress of hymn phrases. These hymns later transformed into new African choral styles by being adapted to African practices that "even had the influence on new folk songs which were sung in four-part harmony, referred to as neo-traditional choral music" (De Beer & Shitandi, 2012:186). Due to the influence of Western traditions and African traditions, choir music in South Africa shows an amalgamation of both.

It is estimated that the beginning of choral singing and other competitive cultural activities in South African schools might be around the 18th and 19th centuries (Nzimande, 1993; Detterbeck, 2002). Research links the onset of choral competitions in South Africa and Southern Africa to the involvement of missionaries. Choral competitions in South Africa originated from the holding of inter-house and

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[10] *Liederwysies* are sacred Afrikaans traditional folk songs (Hendrikse, 1991:290).

inter-school competitions organised by missionary schools to allow learners to excel individually or as groups (Nzimande, 1993).

2.10 Newly composed South African choral works with African elements

De Beer (2007) points out that, experimenting with Western musical styles, has resulted in a new synthesis of choral music with technical, imaginative, intellectual and philosophical expression originating from religious and socio-political influences. Some of these influences can be noted in compositions such as those by Sibisi, a Zulu composer who composed songs such as "We the people of South Africa" (South Africa, 2005). The song is composed in Handel's Baroque style, keeping to African rhythms, call-and-response and tonal inflections of the African language. Many new works have been composed by Black as well as White composers in which strong elements of African music and Western music are integrated. Van Aswegen and Potgieter (2010:71) confirm that "newly composed choral works inspired by African music, or arrangements of folk music for choirs, contribute to the repertoire of choirs worldwide". Examples of choral works by contemporary Black and White South African composers based on African style elements include *Vuka, Vuka, Debora!* by John Knox Bokwe, *Mintirho Ya Vulavula* by SJ Khosa, *Tu Pauperum Refugium* by Hendrik Hofmeyr and African Dawn and *Jelelele* by Niel van der Watt (Van Aswegen & Potgieter, 2010).

Many of these compositions originated as commissioned works specifically for performance at competitions. Khumalo (2010:71) refers to compositions by Black composers prescribed in earlier South African choir competitions (Khumalo, 1998:14). It can, therefore, be argued that choir competitions make a significant contribution to the origin of new choral repertoire that embraces Western and African music style elements. The choice and performance of these songs contributes to social cohesion when received by audiences and spread in society through more performances and recordings. Taking the South African socio-political background into account, the South African National Anthem since 1994, is possibly the most riveting example of socio-cultural cohesion in music. The anthem is a combination of the Xhosa hymn, *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (God bless Africa), composed by Enoch Sontonga in 1897 and *Die Stem* (The call of South Africa) composed by ML de Villiers in 1921.

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2.11 Community singing and social cohesion

There is growing interest in the way in which music and choir festivals contribute to strengthening cohesive community (Barrett & Vermeulen, 2019). Before proceeding to discuss the value of music in promoting social cohesion through community music, the researcher has investigated the contested meaning of community. The term "community" can be defined as "[t]he people of a district or country considered collectively, especially in the context of social values and responsibilities; society" or "[t]he conditions of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common" (Lexico Oxford online dictionary). Delanty (2010:11) refers to the Latin term *communitas* as "an expression of belongings that is irreducible to any social or political arrangement". He explains that "lying at the heart of the idea of community is ambivalence. On the one side, it expresses locality and particulars – the domain of immediate social relations, the familiar, proximity – and, on the other, it refers to the universal community in which all human beings participate" (Delanty, 2010:12). His reference to these two-fold characteristics of community is relevant in "a growing global world where people from different continents increasingly interact". According to Laing and Mair (2015:253) community "may help to share meanings and build social connections … and could be a function of identity, common interests or shared beliefs (the community of interest)".

Choral singing in community has been explored by many researchers (Johnson et al., 2013; Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016; Pearce, Launay, Machin, & Dunbar, 2016; Roué, 2017). In his publication, *The spread of the community music idea*, Dykema (2016:218) writes that community music has become a trend "in the past three years". Dykema (2016) explains that "stated positively and concretely, community music is socialised music; music, to use Lincoln's phrase, for the people, of the people, and by the people" (Dykema, 2016:218).

Community music, such as choirs, forms an integral part of the socio-cultural landscape of communities across the globe (Langston & Barrett, 2008). Specker (2017: 95) points out that "[s]inging communally has long been a cornerstone of social and musical experience" and that "[t]he potential of group singing to generate feelings of community, long suspected, finds a biological base in physiological data collected

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over recent years (Specker, 2017:97). Clift et al. (2012:233) add that "singing in community groups, choirs and choral societies is one of the most widespread forms of active musical participation in many Western societies" and "throughout the world, enormous numbers of people regularly come together to sing, motivated primarily by a love of music and the expressive activity of singing itself". Choral singing has been used to benefit communities in a variety of ways. Some choirs sing for poverty alleviation and galvanisation of social benefits. One such example is the well-known USA for Africa project of 1985 with the song, "We are the World".

For the purpose of this study, choral singing in schools can be viewed as one social platform in the South African community. The researcher based this view on Bell's (2008:230) explanation that a "community choir" as "groups of singers who do not earn a living as singers and are generally not "truly 'professional' in every sense of the word". Bell (2008) adds that community choirs' "membership may include just-graduated high school seniors up to and including true 'senior citizens'" and include "large, institutionally sponsored or supported choirs" as well as "small, non-auditioned groups". With regard to schools in institutional settings, Schippers and Letts (2013:293) maintain that school-based singing activities should not be excluded from the idea of community music making:

> While the rigid education structures of traditional schools and the fluid practices of community music practitioners may seem worlds apart, close collaboration can strengthen both. Despite obvious aspects such sharing spaces and combining events, the interchange between musical material and pedagogical approaches holds the promise of more sustainable practices for both school and community groups.

Sociological benefits derived from choral singing occurs when people sing together, and develop affinity for each other. This can be manifested in the kind of friendship, bonding and cooperation and sense of belonging accumulated among individuals (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Cohen, Perlstein, Chapline, Kelly, Firth & Simmens, 2006; Silber, 2005; Livesey at al., 2012). Veblen (2008:17) describes music in the community as a "powerful force" that forms part of "our personal and professional lives and in the daily lives of the many 'peoples' who make up our communities".

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Referring to music events, Laing and Mair (2015:264) confirm that "the promotion of a festival space as a space for communion performs an important social role in bringing people together and giving them the opportunity to let off steam and build connections, potentially breaking down social barriers".

Literature on the role of community singing presents numerous references to fostering social inclusion (Welch, Himonides, Saunders, Papageorgi & Sarazin, 2014; Laing & Mair, 2015; Batt-Rawden & Andersen, 2020), social capital (Wilks, 2011; Langston & Barrett, 2008) as well as social cohesion (Boer & Abubakar, 2014; Pearce et al., 2016) through music-making activities. Specker (2014:63) affirms that "singing communally is an opportunity that can lead to generating feelings of social cohesion" and that "participating in a choir strengthened feelings of community among choir members". It can, therefore, be argued that social cohesion result from the interaction of singers, conductors and other role players involved.

In this study the researcher explores the idea as expressed by Hayward (2015:32) that "[m]usic as mediator between individual and group music brings people together by creating the conditions for forming social relationships. This is echoed by Joseph and Southcott (2014) who link choir participation to social cohesion by pointing out that singing in choirs can provide social support and interactive opportunities through which members achieve a sense of fulfilment, autonomy, pride and community appreciation.

2.12 Choir competition

In order to gain a better understanding of the meaning of the concept "choir competition", the researcher investigated the basic meaning of each of the words, "choir" and "competition". The word "choir" can be explained as "a company of singers" or "an organized body of singers who perform at concerts [as part of] a choral society or institution". Sadie and Tyrrell (2001) explain a choir as "a group of singers who perform together either in unison or, much more usually, in parts". (Stevens:n.d) points out that the two terms "choir" and "chorus" ("derived from the Greek word *choros) "*are sometimes used interchangeably". In the context of this study the term "choir" refers to

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a mixture of men and women (boys and girls) or in cases of single-sex schools, boys only or girls only, who sing together. The term "school choir" refers to extra-curricular choir activities involving school-going learners. Hayward (2015:32) argues that "from a musical point of view", the term "choir" can have two different "effects": firstly, an individual's singing is amplified acoustically when synchronised with the singing of others. Secondly, new musical aspects emerge, such as when a melody is put in counterpoint with another melody and the harmonic and rhythmic structure changes – by changing a part you are simultaneously changing the whole (Hayward, 2015:32).

Building on a study by Rohrer in 2002, Lowe (2018:79) defines a music competition as "an organised event in which groups or individuals are adjudicated and rankings given. Rankings, such as a first, second and third place represent an objective assessment of participant performances relative to each other by one or a panel of adjudicators. A competition-festival, although frequently promoted as a 'festival', also involves adjudication and the awarding of performance certificates". Referring to the term "adjudication" Lowe (2018:82) explains that "[m]usical quality tends to be judged" and that "[c]riticism is particularly directed at the evaluation process."

Garcia and Schiff (2013:635) explain the term "competition" as "comparison concerns as the desire to achieve or maintain a superior relative position". A choir competition can, therefore, be regarded as a group of singers taking part as contestants in a singing event to be judged by an individual or panel and rated and awarded according to their performance level.

An understanding of the concept "choir competition" can be linked to "music as a resource … for accomplishing a social action, a tool for achieving an end" (McCormick, 2008:25). McCormick (2008) refers to Bourdieu who regards arts as "instrumental in the project of status accumulation": firstly, as "artistic production", competition "serves as a resource for obtaining a position" while secondly, in the domain of "consumption", it serves as "a resource for distinction" (McCormick, 2008:25). According to Rawlings (2019:47), a competition refers to "music events where youth perform for a panel of judges to receive a rating, ranking, score, and comments" and that "[m]usic contests, festivals, and competitions are broadly subsumed by the term adjudicated events". For the purpose of this study, the concept "choir competition" refers to a formally organised

gathering of school choirs who enter to compete against each other, by being evaluated by adjudicators appointed by the competition organisers. Rules and guidelines, including categories, eliminations and prescribing music, are followed.

2.13 Role players in choir competitions

Various institutions and role players form part of and contribute to the experiences of school choir competitions: the singers (choir members), conductors, accompanists, parents, school organisers and management, national policy makers and supporting institutions, organisations presenting choir competitions, audiences and the broader society (Ashworth-Bartle, 2003). For the purpose of this study the researcher focuses on two role players, namely, the conductor and the adjudicator.

2.13.1 The choir conductor

Freer (2009) explains that the role of the conductor is to communicate feedback to the choir, which includes elements of the spoken word, vocal modelling, and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions or pre-arranged signals. "Conducting and the role of the conductor as known today has evolved and are a relatively new occurrence, not dating back more than about hundred and fifty years" (Van der Sandt, 2013:6). Referring to instrumental bands taking part in competitions, Buyer (2005:31) believes that competitions offers the conductor "the potential to help our students become better musicians ... more successful in developing self-discipline, good practice habits, high expectations, and pride than bands that do not compete".

Van der Sandt (2013:9) offers insight into qualities needed for a choir conductor to function successfully as choir director. He divides these qualities into three categories: firstly, "philosophical principles underpinning the role of the conductor" (including knowledge of choral repertoire, the voice, the artistic potential of the music and an understanding of the nature of his or her role as conductor). Secondly, "musical-technical" aspects (including aural skills, effective conducting technique, the capability to facilitate warm-up and voice-building exercises, the ability to establish, demonstrate and perform the character of the music). Thirdly, "behavioural-interpersonal" traits to communicate and motivate all role players involved. These qualities may contribute to

the conductor's motivation for entering a choir competition, the way the competition will be approached and the standard and outcomes of the performance.

Carnicer, Garrido and Requena (2015) highlight leadership as a vital competence of a conductor (be it a choir, orchestra or band). Carnicer et al. (2015) distinguish between the role of a conductor during a rehearsal and his or her role during a concert. The role of a conductor during rehearsals includes time management and effective use of words and expression. At the concert the conductor becomes a mediator between the ensemble, the work and the public (Carnice et al., 2015).

Apart from music, teaching and personal characteristics, Ward-Steinman (2010) regards the ability to prepare choristers for contests as one of the important skills of a conductor. When taking into account the wide spectrum of abilities a conductor needs to obtain a level of success when participating in a competition, the question arises, whether conductors are exposed to quality training and whether they are adequately prepared for this task. Keeping in mind that conductors find themselves in a vulnerable position to perform with their choirs in public and be publicly judged, the element of quality choir education is relevant.

2.13.2 The choir conductor selecting repertoire

One of the key responsibilities associated with being a choir conductor includes selecting songs for the choir. Ashworth-Bartle (2003) emphasises the importance of selecting repertoire as one of the most difficult and time-consuming practices, implying that repertoire selection is the foundation of a successful choir and its programme. The ability to choose appropriate repertoire is at the heart of a conductor's skills and are considered to play a major role in the success of a choir (Pohjola, 1993; Apfelstadt, 2000; Lamb, 2006:8; Carnice et al., 2015). The choice of repertoire has a direct influence on the success of a choir's performances (Van Aswegen, 2011). Gackle (2006) agrees that successful repertoire selection can affect the overall choral experience, objective setting, rehearsal process, voice development, rehearsal techniques, and final programming. Albinder (2009) comments on the challenging task that conductors face to create an interesting, entertaining, and educationally sound choir programme. Louw (2014) believes that his role is crucial since it has an influence

on the singer's lives and their musical development (Louw, 2014). Choirs, audiences, the choir community as well as the broader society benefit through exposure to choral repertoire that conductors choose to meet some aesthetic expectations and sharing the performance (Louw, 2014).

2.13.3 Conductor development and training

Researchers are concerned about the limited or complete lack of development and training opportunities available to South African choir conductors (Detterbeck, 2002; Dzorkpey, 2011; Van der Sandt, 2013). For apparent reasons, a lack of skills and training opportunities will impact conductors' confidence and outcomes when participating in a competition (Detterbeck, 2002). Dzorkpey (2011) reports that many choir conductors are exposed to taking part in competitions, and have to perform prescribed works of a high standard, without the needed background of training and acquired skills and knowledge. Freer (2009) argues that conductors who are not grounded in well-graded music knowledge will experience hardship in developing confidence and self-reliance. Walders (2005) found that conductors often lacked training in vocal technique.

Further education and in-training opportunities for South African choral conductors seem to be limited in comparison to ongoing endeavours of offering training platforms for conductors (in the United States of America (USA), for example). The purpose of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) is to "inspire excellence in choral music through education, performance, composition, and advocacy" and the association offers opportunities for development of choral music teachers (ACDA, 2017). This organisation presents conferences, workshops, conventions and clinics in various geographical regions. Van der Sandt (2013) underlines the importance to address the lack of opportunities for choral practitioners to deepen their theoretical knowledge and practical conducting abilities.

2.13.4 The choir adjudicator

The way in which Davies (1954) reflects on the role of the adjudicator in *The good-natured man. Reflections on the art of adjudication*, still rings truth in our times. Davies

(1954:249) argues that although "the function of the critic is to find fault" and that "the function of the adjudicator is to judge", the terms "adjudication" and "criticism" should not be confused. The role of the adjudicator "may contain criticism" but equally important, is the adjudicator's ability to "find merit" in each participant in the process of ranking. Davies describes various qualities that contribute to defining a competent adjudicator. The first two prerequisites are listed as "knowledge" or "academic qualifications", while the second is a "sound experience or a proven competence in a particular medium".

Surprisingly, Davies (1954) argues that knowledge and proven performance competence alone are not the only building blocks in the making of a skilled adjudicator. Referring back to the title of his publication, he underlines the notion that an adjudicator has to realise that he is working with humans and that being judged is by default an environment loaded with tension and uncertainties. Davies (1954:249) therefore argues that "[h]e who possesses the greatest knowledge may not necessarily prove the best adjudicator. He may know much, but knowledge is not art. Yet our good-natured man must be as knowing as he is wise. Kindliness is a very necessary virtue for him". Davies (1954:249) adds that "[a]djudication, then, is an art demanding wisdom, knowledge, sincerity, kindliness, humour, dignity, clarity, brevity, impartiality and spontaneity. … In possessing and practising these qualities, the adjudicator himself becomes an artist in his own right".

The requirements for an adjudicator are even higher than that of a choir conductor (Gräbe & De Villiers, 1991). To meet a level of excellence in adjudicating, an adjudicator should have knowledge about a wide variety of choir situations. Furthermore, the adjudicator should constantly take care that not one aspect of his or her own personal view overshadows a well-balanced assessment. The adjudicator has to display the ability to hear all the important facets in a choral performance to identify shortcomings, formulate and apply appropriate terminology correctly and on top of it all, be able to offer solutions to address certain problem areas. All these listed abilities require more than a basic knowledge of different types of choirs (Gräbe & De Villiers, 1991:247[11]). Gräbe and De Villiers (1991) list the following criteria used in the

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[11] Translated from Afrikaans into English.

adjudication of choirs: intonation (highlighted as the cornerstone of choral singing and a prerequisite for quality choral work), sound quality, performing the music score correctly while interpretation the music (the latter referring to the integrity of the conductor to decide on aspects such as tempo, style, dynamics, while respecting the composer's indications), diction and pronunciation, choir discipline (a balance between focused attention and enthusiasm), appropriate choice of repertoire, effective and balanced accompaniment and convincing communication with the audience.

Research indicates that the standard of an adjudicator's assessment of choirs strongly depends on experience: firstly, experience as being educated – musical, academic training; secondly, experience in educating others – teaching, or in the choral setting, conducting experience, and lastly, "years of experience" in assessing other choirs (Hansen, 2017:4–6). Hansen (2017:69) explains that previous research on adjudication is limited to "reviewed training only in the forms of experience" and confirms the need for research exploring further training and development opportunities aimed at choir adjudicators.

The adjudicator's role is closely linked to the reasons why conductors enter their choirs in competitions. Millard (2014) finds that choir conductors value the comments of adjudicators and that a significant reason conductors choose to participate is "to improve work ethic and motivation, to hear the judges' feedback, and to increase attention to musicianship" (Millard, 2014:91). Stegman (2009:64) describes the role of the adjudicator as "to listen, to affirm, to help the students grow and improve" and "to be constructive and instructive". Napoles (2009:267) points out that "adjudication is a regular component of musical performing groups' experiences used as an assessment tool" and adds that it can "have consequential effects".

Scott and Chaote (2004) regard an adjudicator as an educator who is not in any way superior to the choir conductors. They regard the main responsibility of an adjudicator as that which provides support to conductors and helps performing groups to reach the best quality. They argue that many teacher conductors who are able to grasp what is needed to perform successfully and communicate musical and technical concepts to performers could perform the task of an adjudicator.

Literature about choral adjudication raises concerns about the selection of adjudicators (Dzorkpey, 2011). Dzorkey (2011:8–11) refers to the lack of adjudicators' objectivity as one of the causes for loss of interest in competitions. He identifies adjudicators' limited musical knowledge as another cause of the dissatisfaction about adjudication. Lori (2002) reports that adjudicators (especially novices) often find the judging process a daunting task and the fast pace of the evaluation process challenging.

Research includes reflections and opinions of adjudicators themselves on their role and challenges experienced. Latimer (2007) admits that a lack of fairness and reliability, especially regarding novice adjudicators, can influence the reliability of adjudication. One could argue that every adjudicator needs to start somewhere as a novice judge. It is, therefore, not surprising that some research suggests the need for training and development opportunities for adjudicators (Van der Sandt, 2013). Stegman (2009) emphasises that the lack of well-trained adjudicators can limit the rate of success that choir competition can potentially achieve. It is clear that the adjudicator's task is nothing less than challenging and complex. The adjudicator remains an individual with subjective perceptions. As Davies (1954:249) rightly points out, the adjudicator is "after all, only mortal".

2.14 The reliability of adjudication practices

The reliability of the rating and results in choir competitions remains a cause of controversy and various approaches are followed in adjudicating (Ekholm, 2000; Hansen, 2017). Wesolowski (2012:37) describes the complexity of adjudication of music performances as follows:

> A primary difficulty with performance assessment is managing its subjective nature. The testing and assessment of music will always be affected by aesthetic value judgments. Human reasoning is used to establish test criteria, determine the method of testing, determine the method of scoring, and interpret scores. The combination of this subjectivity with the ephemeral nature of music makes music performance assessment an especially arduous task.

The unpredictability of adjudicating results is strengthened by research which reveals that even "experienced adjudicators seldom demonstrate consistency rates above 25% when rating the same performance twice" (Cheek, 2007:21). Cooksey (1977:101) raises concerns about adjudication systems that lack the systematic measuring of choral performance achievement. Some of these challenges include the absence of objective measuring instruments, subjective opinions in judging the performance achievement of choral groups, and a lack of agreement concerning criteria (for example expressive versus objective).

Numerous studies warn that the emphasis on non-musical aspects of adjudication in certain instances could have a detrimental effect towards social cohesion. Howard (2012) argues that attire counts, and formal attire gives performers an added advantage when adjudicated. Hansen (2017:23) maintains that "performance context" and "purpose of the assessment performance context" should be taken into account in adjudicating practices. Various non-musical factors could potentially influence the context and the way in which adjudicators evaluate choirs. Hansen (2017) lists the following: the purpose of the event, the type of performance, performance proportions (for example, a choir consisting of a vast number of members may have a stronger impact and appeal to some adjudicators), the performance environment, prior knowledge regarding performers and expectations, visual stimuli (for example the choir and conductor's appearance, choreography or movement on stage), the stage presence and personality of the conductor, the conducting style of the conductor, and race perceptions. Another non-musical aspect that Hansen (2017) takes into account is the adjudicator's personality as it influences how s/he perceives music and how they react to it. Stegman (2009) is apprehensive about musical and extra-musical influences on the reliability of results. Howard (2012:167) confirms that "visual and non-musical factors influence adjudicators' perceptions of performance quality". Other considerations include attire, and presentability related to visual impressions (Gabrielsson, 1999).

Ekholm (2000) finds that adjudicators' personal preferences influence and inform their rating decisions regarding music performance. Hansen (2010) highlights one of the factors that may influence the adjudicator's decisions as prior knowledge of the conductor's academic background and level of training. While one might suspect that

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conductors with a solid music background and training will probably do better in competitions, Hansen (2010) points out that some adjudicators may be more rigid in judging such conductors. He regards this impediment in adjudication practices as one of the most significant findings in his study: "[t]he most important discovery, however, was that evaluators were more sensitive to the 'poor conducting' condition than to the 'good conducting' condition", and continues that this means "that there might be bias among music professionals regarding the appearance of an ensemble's conductor including his or her conducting style" (Hansen 2017:36). Bergee (2003) includes a tight schedule and fatigue as aspects that may influence the reliability of adjudication.

Hansen (2017) and Twin (2020) discuss the Delphi method, coined by Olaf Helmer and Norman Dalkey in the 1950s, as one measuring tool used by a panel of judges. This method involves a process in which a group of experts arrives at a decision by group response through questionnaires, adjusting outcomes where relevant toward a shared agreement resulting in consensus. Twin (2020) argues that the Delphi method fails in its time-consuming nature and its lack of immediate interaction through live debates. "A live discussion can sometimes produce a better example of consensus, as ideas and perceptions are introduced, broken down and reassessed" (Twin, 2020).

Developing a dependable rubric seems to be a key component of improving the reliability of music performances (Hansen, 2017; Twin, 2020). Wesolowski (2012:36) regards the challenge to manage the "subjective nature" of adjudication as a main obstacle and reasons that in order "to help improve objectivity, rubrics can be used to develop a set of guidelines for clearly assessing" musical performances.

2.15 The reliability of adjudication practices and cultural diversity

The inception of the new democracy, and consequently the culturally diverse education system, did not only create a new nation for South Africa, but also led to many challenges in terms of keeping the races and their respective cultures and social value in equilibrium (Meier & Hartell, 2009). This change led to an increase in the heterogeneity of the student population, change in curricula and inception of new educational legislature (Meier & Hartell, 2009). Choirs became equally affected by the passing of the new regulations, which required a new approach that integrates rather than segregates. In the South African education system, a protocol set the tone for the

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management of choir competitions where all races in the school sector are embraced and all racially inclined practices of the past repealed.

South African school choir competitions provide a diverse platform for different cultures thus offering an opportunity for a multicultural interaction between learners, conductors and adjudicators. This is reflected in the promulgation of Prof. Kader Asmal's initiative of the schools' protocol, which embodied the objectives to create a multicultural participation in school choral music in the post-apartheid South Africa (South Africa, 2000). Van As (2012:75) suggests that

> [s]inging in a multicultural choir offers unique opportunities for choir members to experience each other's expressive communication processes through the traditional songs of the cultures presented in the choir. These experiences can foster deeper understanding and so begin a process whereby perceptions of others and the world are modified.

Cultural diversity in the choral landscape presents not only pathways to social cohesion, but also tension. The following scholars raise concerns about challenges presented by competitions. Cheek (2007) investigates the effect of racial perception on adjudicators' ratings of choral performances and finds that "biases affect adjudicators' evaluation decisions". This study proves that negative racial perceptions is one of the challenges that potentially influence the reliability of adjudication. Meier & Hartell (2009) warns about the tension that ensued as a result of poor management of diversity thus failing to meet the interest of others in the practices and participation. Meier & Hartell (200) reiterate that "[t]he increasing cultural diversity in educational institutions necessitates that educationists teach and manage learners with cultures, languages and backgrounds that are unknown to them". Meier & Hartell's concern highlights an important challenge.

Apart from cultural diversity in choir populations, repertoire reflecting cultural diversity plays a significant role (Van Aswegen & Potgieter, 2010). Folk songs form a significant part of choral repertoire of South African choirs across various groups (Heacker, 2012). According to Mpetshwa (2016:7), the category in the SASCE choir competition (now known as ABC Motsepe) "indigenous folklore", refers to "indigenous, traditional music

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from an oral based culture, as practised by different ethnic groups in South Africa"
including the South African cultural groups, amaNdebele, amaSwati, amaXhosa,
amaZulu, Bapedi, Batswana, Basotho, Bavenda and Batsonga.

The powerful potential role that folk music as choral repertoire can play in fostering
social cohesion is captured in Pohjola's (1993) words:

> Music knows no boundaries. Songs from different countries, sung in their
> original tongues, have opened gates to the understanding of cultures that differ
> from our own. It is music that expresses the core of a culture; it evokes images,
> gives impressions, and touches emotions. These experiences pave the way for
> an acceptance of diversity and variety in human life (Pohjola, 1993:112).

Although folk songs are both valuable and popular material performed by most choirs,
it also presents numerous challenges. In a South African multiculturally diverse society,
the performance and adjudication of indigenous music raises some serious concerns.
Mpetshwa (2016) finds that the criteria and rating scale for the adjudication of folk
music are often not adequate to address the nature of folk music performance
practices. Mpetshwa (2016) argues that African music originally did not distinguish
between performers and audience and involved all present as part of everyday
celebrations. Therefore, choirs in a competitive setting, primarily perform for a panel of
adjudicators to be judged and the context is different than the original way indigenous
folklore was performed.

Van Aswegen and Potgieter (2010) list challenges that non-African choirs face when
including indigenous folk songs in concert programmes: finding and choosing
appropriate African songs (especially new arrangements that have not become too
well known in the choral society); obtaining assistance concerning the pronunciation
of the lyrics in the original language and understanding the meaning and context;
finding help to adhere to appropriate performance practices such as movements,
instrumental accompaniment; striving to reach some level of authenticity reachable for
performance as outsiders of the culture; dealing with issues such as variations in folk
songs and dances (especially when judged by adjudicators who might be familiar with
one variation); and dealing with issues of copyright of African folk music (the debate

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on who owns the music and in what respectful way it can be represented.) All these issues have an influence on the way in which adjudicators evaluate folk song performances of choirs. Impey and Nussbaum (1996) add that tension can be seen in the way adjudication is based on Western music styles.

> African societies generally do not categorise music and dance as two separate and distinct art forms. In fact, they are so interconnected that they are accorded the same term in many vernacular African languages. In isiZulu, the term *ingoma* refers to "song and dance" performed at rituals, festivals and community celebrations. Likewise, *mahobelo* in Southern Sotho, *hhiba* in Northern Sotho, and *pina* in Setswana refer to "song and dance" as integrated cultural activities or processes (Impey & Nussbaum, 1996:3).

This stereotypical focus can result into marginalisation of groups. Impey and Nussbaum (1996) argue that sound quality is perceived differently in African and Western perspectives, and the placement of sound is not such an important point of focus in African music cultures as it is in Western orientated perspectives.

Studies show that two approaches to the management of cultural diversity should be considered. Torrico, Lepe, Rodrigo and Ordaz (2018) identify two approaches to diversity management: the colour-blind diversity approach and segregated diversity approach. The colour-blind diversity approach is lauded for its ability to recognise that the "social world is based on the premise that it is sufficient to embrace cultural differences among various racial and ethnic groups without acknowledging disparities among these groups in power, status, wealth, and access". However, the weakness about this approach is that it fails to recognise the elements of racial and ethnic discrimination that individual members of the group may face.

The segregated diversity approach, on the other hand, acknowledges the need for inclusion. It also promotes proportional representation. Its weakness is that it does not necessitate the requirement for equal representation and parity throughout all ranks of an organisation. With the above said, Torrico et al. (2018:69) suggest that a critical diversity management approach should be explored as it addresses issues of "discrimination, exclusion and stratification that envelope processes of construction of

differences, questioning and challenging the notions of 'colour-blindness' and meritocracy". However, Meier & Hartell (2009) point out that this approach should not suggest a single overriding culture which can lead to uniform assimilation of cultures, but rather an approach of tolerance towards the different languages, cultures and religions in the South African educational system.

From the above, it is thus understood that culturally diverse choral repertoire poses many challenges. However, it also suggests that the singing of folk music provides a possible link between choral singing and social cohesion.

2.16 Global interest in choir competitions

There is a worldwide interest in participating in choir competitions (Livesy et al., 2012). Choir organisations offering competitive and non-competitive choir events have become a platform of international magnitude, and subsequently evolved into a multicultural space for a spectrum of age groups who share a passion for choral singing (IFCM, 2016). One of the most significant choral organising federations is known as the International Federation of Choral Music (IFCM). Formed in 1982, it aspires to create bridges among national and intercontinental choral organisations from five continents: tThe American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) in the USA, A Coeur Joie International (France), European Choral Association; Europa Cantat (Europe), Japan Choral Association (Japan) and Nordisk Korforum (NKF) in Scandinavia (IFCM, 2017). Interkultur, is an international host of festivals and competitions, which presents continental events such as the European and Asian Choir Games, and the World Choir Games. Its mission is quoted as follows: "bringing together people of all countries, cultures and world views in peaceful competitions" (Interkultur, 2020(a):n.p.). The purpose of the World Choir Games (quoted below) reflects the notion of social cohesion through choir competition (Interkultur, 2020(a):n.p.):

> The idea to create an event like the World Choir Games is based on the Olympic ideals, which aim to peacefully unify people and nations connected by song in a fair competition. This idea is supposed to inspire people to experience the power of interaction by singing together.

From the literature on the variety of choir organisations and the enthusiasm with which it is received globally, it can be concluded that choir competition is one of the well supported cultural activities worldwide.

2.17 Choir competitions in South Africa

Many South African choirs are enthusiastic participants in choir competitions, not only locally, but also on an international level. This is reflected in the number of choirs that entered the Word Choir Games 2020; more than five hundred choirs from across the world, of which forty are South African choirs, have entered. Apart from regional choir Eisteddfods and festivals hosted in various cities and towns across South Africa, there are also numerous national choir competitions that are well supported by choirs and audiences alike. Such competitions include Cantamus South African National Choir Festival & Competition, Cantus Choralis National Choir Competition, Ihlombe South African Choral Festival, Old Mutual National Choir Festival, Philip H Moore: Ivumo Choir Festival, Polmusca National Unity Festival (The annual Police Music and Cultural Association choir competition hosted by the South African Police Service) and choir competitions broadcast on South African national television such as Clash of the Choirs South Africa and Sing in Harmonie. Adding to the above De Beer and Shitandi (2012) refer to the notion of choral performance in spheres, referring to the musical concerts, cultural festivals, and music competitions that are held in South Africa on annual or biannual bases. These authors argue that there is no distinction between the concepts, "competition" and "choir festival", and regard them as terms that can be used interchangeably. According to the two authors, choir competitions can be organised by churches, schools or private companies.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher decided to focus on two South African school choir competitions: the ABC Motsepe National School Choir competition (hosted by the South African Department of Basic Education and formerly known as SASCE, the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod) and the ATKV-Applous National School Choir Competition, (presented by the Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging (ATKV), a national Afrikaans cultural organisation).

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2.17.1 ABC Motsepe School Choral Eisteddfod

The current public schools choir competition, which is compulsory, was initiated by Prof. Kader Asmal, the Minister of Education in South Africa from 1999 to 2004. Its launching name was *Tirisano* School Choir Eisteddfod (TSCE). This school choir competition for public schools was established in 2000 as part of the transformation process that was aimed to change the face of music in schools from that which was fragmented along racial lines to that which seeks to include learners from all races in South Africa. The competition is presented by the Department of Basic Education in collaboration with other sister departments such as the Department of Arts and Culture. In 2006, the name, *Tirisano,* was changed to the South African School Choral Eisteddfod. Since 2016 the competition is known as the ABC Motsepe SASCE, to carry the name of the current sponsor, which is ABC Motsepe Foundation. In addition to ABC Motsepe as principal sponsor, this choir competition enjoyed the support of other private businesses such as First National Bank South Africa, AVBOB, Via Africa, and Macmillan Education. Other sponsorships came from multinational organisations such as the European Union, UNESCO, and UNICEF. ABC Motsepe is part of the sub-programme called Mobilisation and Partnership in Education. Since its official launch in 2001, this schools' choir competition has been organised under the protocol known as the Schools Protocol for the Organisation, Management, Coordination and Monitoring of School Music Competitions (South Africa, 2000). It is one of the school enrichment programmes and it resides under the Directorate School Safety and Enrichment programmes. The main objective of this policy is to integrate school music competitions into one single nationally and provincially run event. One of the key purposes of the school enrichment programmes is to promote social cohesion (South Africa, 2016). The Minister of Basic Education describes the ABC Motsepe as a flagship cultural event in the department meant to achieve this objective. Researchers such as Dzorkpey (2011) and Hoffman (2013) allude that ABC Motsepe is currently the largest school choir platform in South Africa.

The ABC Motsepe school competition involves participation of primary school choirs in Grades R to 3 and Grades 4 to 7. Secondary schools enter choirs under the secondary (A) and secondary (B) categories. While some school choirs compete in the primary school (Grades R–7) and secondary school (Grades 8–12) categories

only, some schools enter choirs including members from all grades (Grades R–12).

The ABC Motsepe is strictly for public school choirs. Conductors must be school teachers who are currently employed by the schools. The competition is organised by the Department of Basic Education at national level. Choirs are awarded prizes according to the average mark they obtain, and awards include trophies, prize money and tokens such as keyboards and pianos. Other prizes include best solo performance, the best conductor, and the best run province. ABC Motsepe is run on four levels: 1) area project (circuit) eliminations; 2) district eliminations, which include only choirs that have obtained positions 1, 2 and 3 at circuit level; 3) provincial championship; and 4) national championships. Only winning choirs at provincial level are invited to the national championship.

Commenting on ABC Motsepe, Dzorkpey (2011) regards the above levels of the ABC Motsepe competition as problematic and unnecessary. He also notes that ABC Motsepe music prescription as very challenging for learners and the programme as too tedious. He views this as a drawback because this ignores the background of choirs and not being mindful of issues such as distance and financial circumstances (Dzorkpey, 2011). Reforms implemented by ABC Motsepe include schools competing in a separate sections to accommodate choirs from small, rural and poor schools, mainly from farm settlements. The prescribed music for these choirs has been adapted to meet their needs. Songs prescribed for these schools are basic with few voice parts. A second reform is the inclusion of an own choice category to accommodate learners with disabilities. This group may choose music in any language and submit copies of songs or lyrics before their performance. The submission of music scores is not compulsory and choristers are free to sing songs of their own choice by ear.

2.17.2 ATKV-Applous national school choir competition

ATKV-Applous is a project of the ATKV. This Afrikaans cultural organisation was established in 1930. The main objective was to preserve and promote the Afrikaans language and culture. ATKV-Applous was launched officially in 1978. The word "applous" means applause, or, cheering by way of hand clapping to express

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appreciation from the audience (ATKV, 2019). The aim of ATKV-Applous is to promote Afrikaans choral work as well as to enhance the enjoyment and standard of youth choir singing in South Africa. Choirs are awarded certificates according to their performance: ATKV Cum Laude (90% and higher) ATKV Gold (80%–89%) ATKV Silver (70%–79%) and ATKV Bronze (60%–69%). The average marks allocated by the panel of judges are revealed, and not the judges' individual scores. Other awards are for the best choir, best performance of a prescribed work, best performance of a traditional African song, best performance of an Afrikaans composition, and best performance of a programme in the open category. The prizes are awarded to choirs performing at primary and high school levels. In contrast to ABC Motsepe, ATKV-Applous is not a compulsory competition, participation is voluntary and choirs with the highest marks at regional competitions compete in the final national round. Furthermore, ATKV-Applous does not award money or musical instruments as prizes, as is the case of ABC Motsepe.

Reforms implemented by ATKV-Applous in the recent past include new rules to accommodate cultural groups other than the Afrikaans-speaking society who were never part of this competition in the past years. Another change in ATKV-Applous comprises the introduction of less experienced Afrikaans mother-tongue choirs, less experienced non-Afrikaans mother-tongue choirs and more experienced choirs (Afrikaans and non-Afrikaans). The ATKV-Applous is divided into two main categories with subcategories as follows: the primary school categories are: prestige, merit Afrikaans, merit non-Afrikaans, junior choirs Afrikaans, junior choirs non-Afrikaans, open category and non-competitive category. High schools' categories include: prestige, mixed, girls, boys; merit: Afrikaans, mixed, girls, boys; merit: non-Afrikaans, mixed, girls, boys, the open category and the non-competitive category. Sheet music is optional in the open category, provided that the background of the piece is explained. Sheet music is not handed in in the own choice category, or for folk music in any European or African language. These changes contributed to the increase in the levels of participation and excitement, particularly in the African section. Of the four works included in each choir's programme, one item of African folklore is compulsory.

The sharing of diverse cultural music in ATKV-Applous is reflected in the concert programmes. Today Afrikaans learners sing Setswana songs such as "Se nkgatele mosadi" (wedding song) and "Shosholoza" (a work song). African learners, on the other hand, now sing Afrikaans songs such as "Volkswysie potpourri", "Bly van die Taaibos weg" and many more. The ATKV-Applous audience is multiracial, resulting from the removal of language and cultural barriers.

The literature above reflect some indication of both ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous as thriving choir organisations who attract enthusiastic participation of choirs from some culturally diverse nature.

2.18 Choir competitions and social cohesion

Investigating choir singing in community seems to present social cohesion as a natural outcome. However, exploring choir competitions' contribution to social cohesion necessitates addressing challenges and tensions inherent to the nature of competitiveness itself. Competition between individuals, groups and organisations is an intrinsic part of human behaviour in society as people "strive for limited resources, services, and status" (Swab & Johnson, 2019:147). Swab and Johnson (2019) point out that research on competitiveness is limited, notwithstanding its relevance to dynamics between individuals, society and organisations.

There is consensus among scholars from cross-disciplinary fields that competitions are universal and that they form an integral part of the way humans function (Kilduff, Elfenbein & Staw, 2010; Garcia et al., 2013). Competitions are ubiquitous and it seems that "[f]or most people, there is something inexplicably compelling about the nature of competition. Perhaps that's because, as some scholars argue, 'competitiveness' is a biological trait that co-evolved with the basic need for (human) survival" as well as a way of playing, of having fun (Van der Linden, 2015:n.p.).

In the music spheres, the active participation in and support of competitions are no different (Buyer, 2005). Sturman (2019:610) aptly notes that

> [t]he very idea that a creative practice can be objectively adjudicated and ranked may seem dubious or even misguided to many musicians and scholars, yet competitions are a widespread and prominent feature of numerous music traditions, both around the world and across historical time.

To explore the link between choir competitions and social cohesion, aspects that offer opportunities opposed to factors that present tension play a role. An investigation with concerning benefits and disadvantages of choir competitions, offers a pathway to exploring connections between choir competition and social cohesion. Literature reveals many researchers debating numerous reasons why competition presents more disadvantages to participants than positive outcomes (Rohrer 2002). According to Byer (2005:30) the impact of competition can be detrimental if "winning becomes the ultimate goal", if the participants "become conditioned to respond only to motivation associated with competition" and if there are signs of the "burnout factor". Rawlings (2019) also acknowledges disadvantages of competitions including the amount of time and effort in preparing for the competition. Van der Linden (2015) regards the nature of competition that relies on extrinsic incentive, as a hindrance. The level of motivation and energy of participants are heightened during the process of competing in the quest of receiving an award. This "behaviour or decision is sourced externally rather than internally ... [however], a fundamental characteristic (and downside) of nearly all extrinsic incentives is that they only tend to work for as long as the incentive is maintained" (Van der Linden, 2015). This means that choirs may tend to focus on preparing for a competition as a short-term goal, but cease to maintain a level of continuous input and musical growth when the competition ends.

Friedman (2013) questions the increasing pressure on American children to take part in competitive extramural activities and the importance of winning. McCormick (2008) goes further in observing an obsession with competitions in music across the globe. "If 19th-century musical culture was defined by the public concert, our own time will surely be remembered as the era of the competition. Contests have become a fact of life in music worlds of all genres" (McCormick, 2008:37). Kohn (2013), a firm advocate

against competitions, confirms that competition in society is over emphasised. He argues that competition is a learned human behaviour and not a natural phenomenon as some claim.

One key critique against competitions is the emphasis on the results (winning) as opposed to acknowledging and valuing the process, learning experience, and developing cohesion. Millard (2014:93) notes that "[c]ompetitions represent a type of token economy where winning is a token for achieving the goals of musical achievement" and argues that "the token (winning) can become the goal (previously, musical achievement)". This is confirmed by Rawlings (2019) who refers to the way in which performance appraisal in schools may depend more heavily on the results of competitions than on the work of the music teachers in schools. Stanne, Johnson and Johnson (1999) confirm that accentuating winning as the primary and most important goal, leads to high levels of anxiety that not only interfere with performance standards, but also hinder a sense of togetherness between the various participating groups and the possibility of upward social mobility in social cohesion.

Considering numerous disadvantages of competitive choral events, the question arises why choirs choose to participate. Apart from pointing out disadvantages, numerous scholars petition for the value of competitive events (Griffin 2006; Hansen 2017). Millard (2014:90) reports that for conductors, reasons for entering choir competitions are "related to improving work ethic and motivation, hearing the judges' feedback, and increasing students' attention to musicianship" whereas choir members are motivated by winning, getting "high ratings, to be recognized as an award-winning choir, and to increase excitement and morale". Millard (2014:93) continues by saying that choir conductors regard the participation in competitions as "an effort to stimulate high levels of student motivation towards musical goals".

Research studying the effect of competitions indicates that competing may enhance, but may also reduce motivation (Millard, 2014). However, Kilduff et al. (2010:950) claim that having taken both sides into considerations, "a positive link between rivalry and motivation [exists]: real-world contests against known rivals will push competitors to succeed". This is supported by Morgan and Burrows (1981) who suggest that

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competitions and festivals could improve students' music performance, encourage their music creation and enrichment, and raise standards of choral performance.

Sturman (2019:612) acknowledges the "ambivalent role" of music competitions and the tension of the concept of "dividing winners from losers". However, she argues that "to many audiences music contests serve as a convenient framework for understanding the extraordinary complex skills associated with expressive musical performance". Morgan and Burrows (1981) suggest that choir competitions and festivals could improve students' music performance, encourage their music creation and enrichment, and raise standards of choral performance. In support of competitions, Rawlings (2019) notes that participation in music contests "prepare students for lifelong skills, teach students how to control nervous energy to get results, motivate students to work and practice more and offer a chance for unbiased feedback of music performance" (Rawlings, 2019:46). The question derives whether choir competitions can contribute to social cohesion in developing a sense of belonging through social relationships and activities that promote trust, and offer scope for upward social mobility towards equal opportunities.

Stanne et al. (1999:134) reason that in order "to resolve the controversy over competition, one must first place it in the larger context of social interdependence. Social interdependence exists when individuals share common goals and each individual's outcomes are affected by the actions of others". Therefore, one could argue that choir competitions can potentially strengthen interdependence within a choir or school, but may also reach further if the ideals of the competition to enhance cohesion is shared by the role players. It seems as if the influence of choir competitions on developing a connectedness between groups strongly depend on the way role players perceive the meaning of their participation in the competition and the way in which they communicate and portray it.

When a situation is structured cooperatively, individuals' goal achievements are positively correlated; individuals perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the others in the group also reach their goals. Thus, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to all those with whom they are cooperatively linked. A cooperative

structure leads to promotive interaction in which individuals assist and encourage each other's efforts to achieve (Stanne et al., 1999:134).

It seems that perceptions concerning the goal of competitions plays a role in whether competitions will contribute to social cohesion or not. Based on the social interdepended theory, Swab and Johnson (2019:148) confirm that "beliefs about goal interrelations determine the interactive behaviors pursued by an individual". Some research points out that a zero-sum competition (one winner and the others losers) will contribute less to the bigger picture in developing a connectedness between participants than a "goal-setting" situation that focuses on social aspects of experience (Hinsz, 2006:260). One can, therefore, argue that the way in which participants perceive their experience in a competition and a shared goal determine the possibility of social cohesion. This is confirmed by Swab and Johnson (2019:148) who distinguish between "oppositional interaction" and "interpersonal goal concordance" in competitions. They explain oppositional interaction as the process where participants exclusively strive for their own personal gain while failing to acknowledge or contribute to the overall ideals and goal of the competition. Interpersonal goal concordance occurs when "participant goals correlate positively" resulting into "more cooperative behavior and action" (Swab & Johnson, 2019:148). It is, therefore, possible that participants in competitions can increase the possibility of reaching their own set goals, but also collaborate, "enhancing the likelihood for the other person as well".

The role of organisations in strengthening social cohesion through choir competitions emerges as an important theme in the literature.

> Organizations are complex, hierarchical collections of goal interdependencies composed of individuals, work teams, groups, and divisions, each of which possesses a collection of goals that change in response to social dynamics in an environment characterized by limited resources. It seems hardly surprising then that we see the good and bad of competition within organizations as people strive to make their lives better by achieving goals that advance their lives (Swab & Johnson, 2019:160).

Nzimande (1993) expresses concern about the organisers' inability to expand competitions' potential as platforms for further education and training. Referring to the ABC Motsepe choir competition, Dzorkpey (2011) reflects that a lack of, or limited knowledge of choral music, reduce the efficiency of appointed staff members who organise choir competitions. This is particularly applicable to the role of organisers in choosing prescribed music for competitions.

Wilks (2011) confirms the importance of local and national management structures and organisers of music festivals to steer these events into an opportunity to develop social and cultural cohesion. She states that "festival directors themselves have the opportunity to shape the social as well as the cultural policy for the festival" and that "this opportunity could be further encouraged by support from the continued inclusion of festivals in national strategy" (Wilks, 2011:25–26). Taking this into consideration, organisations can be seen as the initial providers of platforms of choir competitions within a clearly articulated framework of social cohesion as one of the prominent formally stated goals. Choral singing can only serve as change agent if the choirs and role players (including conductors and adjudicators) share the belief of a broader role of choral singing to promote a sense of belonging through social relationships that promote trust and offer scope for upward social mobility towards equal opportunities.

2.19 Social cohesion and cultural diversity in choir competitions

African folk songs play a valuable role in choir concert programmes in South Africa (Hammond, 2004; Van As, 2009; Louw, 2014; Mpetshwa, 2016; Barrett, 2017). A study by Van Aswegen (2006) indicates a significant increase in the inclusion of African songs in children's choral repertoire in South Africa since the 1990s. This shows that performance of music in the category, folklore, form a significant part of choir competitions, not only in South Africa, but worldwide.

One wonders what the link is between the growth of folk music as choral repertoire and the fact that it is prescribed as a separate category or as part of a programme in many choir competitions. The following questions can shed light on the argument that competitions provide a platform for the enhancement of folk music as choral repertoire: Would organisers of choir competitions have found it necessary to ensure that the

adjudicator panel consists of a diverse cultural presentation had it not been that diverse indigenous music as part of overall programmes need to be fairly evaluated? Would the assistance of culture bearers in many instances have realised had it not been for choirs' needs to prepare for competitions? Would the need for inviting accompanist of African instrument have risen had it not been spurred by competition performances as main purpose? The collaboration between institutions and role players in finding, preparing and performing folk music might initially be motivated by competitions, leading to a sustainable flow of cultural collaboration. This collaboration, paving the way towards cohesion, links with the term "bridging" (Langston, 2011:164). Bridging aptly describes the process of connecting people from different communities or cultures and enhance a sense of connectedness and belonging (Langston & Barrett, 2008:129). Participation in choir competitions offers a scope for bridging possibilities between societies, including the embracement of culturally diverse realities.

The need for South African choirs to include African songs for international competition purposes is reflected in a study by Van Aswegen and Potgieter (2010) in which they report on the debate dealing with balancing Afrikaans and African music in choir repertoire chosen to perform at competitions. In an Afrikaans newspaper, (Malan, 2004), one of the readers questioned the decision of the conductor of the choir of the University of Stellenbosch, André van der Merwe, for choosing African songs as repertoire to compete in the international 2004 *Musica Mundi* choir competition. The reader asked why the conductor neglected the inclusion of Afrikaans folk songs in a predominantly White choir, and exclusively include African songs to compete in the folklore category. The conductor responded that "African folksongs were chosen above Afrikaans folk songs since indigenous African choral music is dramatic, dynamic and spectacular […] We decided on an African theme since we felt that African folk songs are more expressive and theatrical and would receive more acclaim from the adjudicators" (Van Aswegen & Potgieter, 2010:64).

2.20 Choir competition and dimensions of social cohesion

Compared to Jenson's (1998) dimensions of cohesion, Bottoni (2018) includes participation and legitimacy as posed by Jenson, but excludes belonging and inclusion. For the purpose of this study, the researcher based the discussion of the findings in

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chapter 5 on the scheme constructed by Bottoni (cf. table); belonging (Jenson, 1998) situated as a subjective influence at all three levels and inclusion (Jenson, 1998) placed as an objective level relevant to the three levels.

Table 2.3: Further explanation of Bottoni's social cohesion scheme with seven dimensions (2018: 840)

	Subjective influences Attitude and people's state of mind.	Objective influences Corporative characteristics and purposes of the group as a whole.
Micro level of social cohesion Relations and interaction among individuals. (Early childhood/personal singing and choir experiences/family/friends.)	Interpersonal trust and social support. Factors that fostered an interest in singing and choir participation.	Density of social relations. Level of intensity and standard influencing the relationships.
Meso level of social cohesion Relations and interaction among individuals and groups. (Choir members, conductor, school, parents, school community.)	Openness. Factors that sparked an interest in joining the choir.	Participation. The presence of a purpose-driven nature in which role players participate. The level of intensity and quality of active involvement.

Macro level of social cohesion	Institutional trust.	Legitimacy of institutions.
Relationships among individuals and society. (Relationship between choir members, conductor, school, parents, school as smaller community to institutions, organisers and adjudicators.)	This trust influences factors that serve as driving force for entering choir competitions: trust in institution, organisations and appointed adjudicators; willingness to be placed in a vulnerable public position of being judged.	The outcomes of institutional trust: whether the community value the quality of the adjudication process as well as the standard and status of the competition.

When exploring school choir competitions within the perspective of Bottini's dimensions of social cohesion, the following connections can be constructed: subjective influences involve the attitudes and state of mind of role players in competitions. That involves choir singers, parents and the wider audience community. In the context of this study, the spotlight is placed on the subjective perceptions (attitude and state of mind) of choir conductors and adjudicators. Objective influences include the corporative characteristics and purposes of the group as a whole (institutions such as the schools, district, provincial and national formal structures, creating and implementing policies and steering the competitions).

At the micro level of social cohesion, the focus is placed on the relationships and interaction among individuals during collective music making or singing experiences. This can include early childhood experiences, personal singing and choir experiences or singing with friends or family. The subjective influences at a micro level encompass factors that foster an interest in singing and choir participation based on social support and interpersonal trust. The objective influences pertain to the level of intensity (density) and standard that have an influence on individuals involved.

The meso level of social cohesion involves the relations and interaction among individuals and groups. This can be choir members, conductors, school, parents, and school communities. The subjective influences at a meso level of social cohesion

refs to an openness to collective music making through choral singing, for example, factors that sparked an interest in joining the choir. The objective influences point at participation. This can be described as the presence of a purpose-driven nature in which role players participate. This includes the level of intensity and quality of active involvement.

The macro level of social cohesion accounts for perceptions leading to relationships between choir members, conductor, school, parents, school as smaller community to institutions, organisers and adjudicators. The subjective influences at a macro level of social cohesion involves institutional trust. This trust influences factors that serve as driving force for entering choir competitions: trust in the institution, organisations and appointed adjudicators; cultivation of a willingness to be placed in a vulnerable public position of being judged. The objective influence is the legitimacy of institutions. In a choral setting this can point at the outcomes of institutional trust: whether the smaller school and choir community value the quality of the adjudication process as well as the standard and status of the competition as presented by the institution or organisation.

2.21 Conclusion

Research shows that choral singing plays an important role in the psychological and intellectual development of learners and that it complements the educational role of the school in helping to instil discipline and hard work. Researchers agree that choral music is embraced in almost all societies around the world, and, therefore, its significance as one of the contributors to human development cannot be ignored. From the literature it is clear that where South African choir competitions in the past fostered racial fragmentation, there is some progress in that the current South African choral landscape is used as platform to contribute to healing and uniting society.

The contribution of this study to the body of research literature is an investigation into possible contributions of choir competitions to the development of social cohesion. There is consensus in research literature that choral festivals provide "public spaces to become spheres of pluralism and interaction" (UNESCO, 2009(a)). However, as far as choir competitions are concerned, literature does not shed light on whether

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competitive choral events contribute to the development of social cohesion. The reviewed literature does not inform on how tensions embedded in competitions in separating groups between winners and losers relate to social cohesion. It seems that competitions will remain part of human existence for years to come. As Buyer (2005:37) concludes: "[c]ompetition is here to stay. It works. It motivates. It's fun. It creates goals, provides feedback, and presents challenges".

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

3.1 Theoretical framework in qualitative studies

A theoretical framework guides the researcher in deciding on the issues and questions to study, the participants that should be involved and "how the researcher positions himself or herself in the qualitative study" to offer "recommendations for changes to improve lives and society" (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018:62). This lens becomes a transformative perspective that shapes the type of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analysed, and provides a call for action or change (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Using theory as framework plays an important role to explain the meaning, nature, and challenges associated with a phenomenon, often experienced but unexplained in the world in which we live, so that we may use that knowledge and understanding to act in more informed and effective ways (University of Southern California, 2018). A theoretical framework offers the researcher a "well-developed, coherent explanation for an event" (in this study, choir competitions) to evaluate the "validity of a theory's propositions" in the context of the study and to "apply the theory in the design and conduct of the study" (Vithal & Jansen, 2010:17). Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) chosen as the theoretical framework chosen for this study, is discussed in the next section.

3.2 Transformative Learning Theory

Throughout their lifetimes, people construct meaning based on their experiences: "[t]hey build a way of seeing the world; settle on a way of interpreting what happens to them; and develop the accompanying values, beliefs, and assumptions that determine their behavior" (Cranton, 2016:15). Taylor confirms that "there is an instinctive drive among all humans to make meaning of their daily lives" (Taylor, 2017:5). Cranton (2016:15) describes all humans' experiences and their desire to seek meaning throughout their lives, and maintains that people "build a way of seeing the world; settle on a way of interpreting what happens to them; and develop the accompanying values, beliefs, and assumptions that determine their behavior". Jones (2015) explains that transformative learning encompasses the nature of change and

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the processes leading to the way individuals see and make meaning of the world. The above explanations concerning the way in which humans learn and develop meaning can be traced as far back as 1926, to Lindemann's publication, *The meaning of Adult Education* (Cranton & Taylor, 2013). Research shows that the chief proponent of Transformative Learning Theory was Paulo Feire, who developed his philosophy focusing on how adults construct meaning through learning experiences (Dirkx, 1998:2–3; Mezirow, 2018). This indicates how Freire was well ahead of his time in addressing the issue of "diversity and crossing borders in education, which became a central tenet in the discussion of transformative social justice learning" (Torres, 2007:1). The main perspective of Freire's philosophy is that humanisation is the central problem of society (Fujino, Gomez, Lezra, Lipsitz, Mitchell & Fonseca, 2018). According to Torres (2007), in the spirit of Enlightenment, Freire believes in education as a means to improve the human condition … contributing ultimately to what Freire regards as "the ontological vocation of the human race: humanizing" (Torres, 2007:1). Supporting Friere's philosophy, Cranton and Taylor (2013) affirm Freire's aspect of humanism as core to the transformative theory. They add the following assumptions as principles underlying humanism: "Human nature is intrinsically good; self-concept has an influence on growth; the possibilities of human potential is endless; individuals are free and able to make independent choices; individuals have a desire to achieve self-actualization but need to be accountable to themselves and others; reality is experienced and perceived by each individual" (Cranton & Taylor, 2013:39).

In developing Freire's theory further, Mezirow (2018) set the tone for future scholars with his concept of transformative learning. In his ground-breaking research, Mezirow (2018) focused on how women construct meaning through their experiences as adult students returning to study at community colleges in the early 1970s (Dirkx, 1998; Taylor, 2017; Addleman, Brazo & Cevallos, 2011). Mezirow (2018) coined the term "perspective transformation" referring to the process of critical reflection in which "we come to identify, assess, and possibly reformulate key assumptions on which our perspectives are constructed" (Dirkx, 1998:4), influenced by Freire's concept of "conscientisation" (Mezirow, 2018:114).

In addition to Mezirow building on Freire's earlier approach of humanisation as the central problem of society, this researcher's approach to transformation was also

influenced by Habernas's domains of learning and the dialogue dealing with language as communicative action (Calleja, 2014). Mezirow (2018:115) refers to Habernas who distinguishes between "instrumental learning" and "communicative learning" within transformative learning. Instrumental learning involves "controlling or manipulating the environment", for example, designing a bridge. Communicative learning pertains to a better understanding through means of communication (including art forms such as choral singing) to "access and understand, intellectually and empathetically, the frame of reference of the other and seek common ground with the widest range of relevant experience and points of view possible" (Mezirow, 2018:115). Communicative learning, introduced by Habernas and conscientisation, coined by Freire, are relevant concerning the roles that critical reflection and dialogue play in realising, within transformative learning, the potential that choir competitions have to contribute to the development of social cohesion (Fetherston & Kelly, 2007). This relates to Dirkx (1998:3) who explains "critical consciousness" as "a process in which learners develop the ability to analyze, pose questions, and take action on the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that influence and shape their lives".

TLT enables students or role players in the choir singing environment, to be lifelong learners within an environment where they are challenged to be "actively engaged in critical reflection and dialogue as they question and evaluate their assumptions and thought patterns" (Addleman et al., 2011:59). Wang, Torrisi-Steele and Hansman (2019:244) confirm that educators are lifelong learners and are in the position to establish changes in practice through critical thinking and reflection that lead to "emancipatory learning".

According to Kitchenham (2008), transformative learning differs from the traditional teaching approach. In traditional education, learners receive and depend on the teacher providing knowledge. In transformative learning, adults (as lifelong learners) acquire knowledge by increasing their awareness which provides them with the power to transform their reality. TLT, therefore, is concerned with "understanding and facilitating profound change at both individual and societal levels" (Jones, 2015:267). Gravett (2004:259) defines TLT as follows:

> Transformative learning involves individuals gaining an awareness

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of their current habits of mind, and resulting points of view accompanied by a critique of their assumptions and premises, an assessment of alternative views, a decision to negate an old perspective or view in favour of a new one, or to make a synthesis of old and new, resulting in more justified beliefs to guide action.

Addleman et al. (2011:56) clarify transformative learning as "the process of effecting change in a frame of reference". Cranton (2016:19) argues that "if a person responds to an alternative habit of mind by reconsidering and revising prior belief systems, the learning becomes transformative". Fetherston and Kelly (2007:267) explain that "transformative learning involves profound shifts in our understanding of knowledge, the world, and ourselves". Cranton (2016:18) views transformative learning as situated within constructivism: "we develop or construct personal meaning from our experience and validate it through interaction and communication with others". This means that the way in which we view our world, is the outcome of our experiences and perceptions. Mezirow (2018:116) defines transformative learning as "the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives) which may be sets of assumptions and expectation, to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change". Cranton (2016:20) describes the six habits of mind as 1) epistemic (individual learning styles that do not easily change); 2) sociolinguistic (socio-cultural ideals, including language); 3) psychological (individual self-concepts including "needs, inhibitions, anxiety and fears); 4) moral-ethical ("conscience and morality"); 5) philosophical (an individual's world view, personal philosophy or religion) and 6) aesthetic "values, attitudes, tastes, judgments, and standards about beauty", mainly shaped by socio-linguistic habits of mind and influenced by the culture of a community.

The two pillars of TLT are reflection and discourse (Mezirow, 2018). Mezirow (2018) describes "critical reflection, or critical self-reflection on assumptions" as the "assessment of the sources, nature and consequences of our habits of mind" (Mezirow, 2018:118). Discourse involves role players who are able to participate "fully and freely in dialectical discourse to validate a best reflective judgement" (Mezirow, 2018:118). Fetherston and Kelly (2007:268) agree that "reflection is key to the achievement of

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transformation" and that transformative learning "involves creating spaces for critical engagement and dialogue".

The UNESCO statement regarding dialogue (2009) is as follows:

> Dialogue seeks truth by trusting the other, just as dialectics pursues truth by trusting the order of things, the value of reason and weighty arguments. When we cease to perceive others in fixed and unilateral terms, the potential for authentic dialogue increases significantly: we open up the possibility of moving from mere compromise between fixed positions towards mutual enrichment upon newly discovered common ground.

Opposed to an uncritical or unconscious way of making meaning, is Freire's theory of transformative learning that focuses on what he terms as "consciousness raising", "critical consciousness" or "conscientization" (Dirkx, 1998:2 & 4). This resonates with Taylor (2017:9) who confirms that "fostering transformative learning is seen as a deliberate and conscious strategy". This conscious, critical perspective underlines the importance of fostering an educational environment that invites dialogue and freedom of reflection, resulting in change (Dirkx, 1998; Fetherston & Kelly, 2007).

According to Mezirow (2018), transformative learning can be "epochal" (sudden insight and changes prompted by crisis experiences) or "cumulative" (insight gained and changes implemented over a long period of time). In the context of this study, it is meaningful to investigate Mezirow's (2018) view on cumulative transformation as "a progressive sequence of insights resulting in changes in point of view and leading to a transformation in habit of mind" (Mezirow, 2018:118). This means that organisations or institutions decide on policies (which might include transformative strategies). These policies may influence the perceptions of groups and individuals (such as school choirs, conductors or adjudicators), but do not necessarily result in individuals or groups holding the same values and communicating this accordingly. Taylor (2017) lists three key concepts that play a role in promoting transformative learning: "promoting inclusion (giving voice to the historically silenced), promoting empowerment (not self-actualization, but belongingness and equity as a cultural member), and learning to negotiate effectively between and across cultures" (Taylor,

2017:9). The idea of different experiences of transformative learning is also addressed by Cranston and Taylor (2012). They explain transformative learning as encompassing a rich diversity of perspectives: some may experience transformative learning rationally, some more instinctively. Transformative learning may lead to change in an individual's life or it may be experienced collectively. However, "the outcome is the same, or similar – a deep shift in perspective, leading to more open, more permeable, and better-justified meaning perspectives" (Cranston & Taylor, 2013:3).

3.3 Transformative learning and choir competitions in South Africa

Apart from the meaningfulness of music itself, choral singing provides pathways to make sense of the self and others, as well as making contributions to the world we live in (Livesey et al., 2012). Exploring music as a change agent connects to principles embedded in TLT, which addresses the need to reflect and to "engage in discourses on how we perceive the role of music diversity to alleviate racial discrepancies through collective musicianship" (Van Aswegen & Vermeulen, 2014:182). The question arises whether choir competitions as collective musicianship can provide a space for transformative learning and an environment for fostering social cohesion. The answer might be situated in the core characteristic of transformative learning as the willingness to self-reflect and to engage in open and truthful dialogue, as advocated by Mezirow (1997;2018), Addleman et al. (2011), Cranton (2016) and Wang and Hansman (2019).

When considering choir competitions as platforms for transformative change, it is worthwhile to keep in mind Swab and Johnson's (2019) perspective on what competition entails. They maintain that competition is not merely about the outcome of winning or losing, but also involves "the actions, behaviors, and arguments" made by those who participate [giving] meaning to the experience" (Swab & Johnson, 2019:147). Referring to a study by Heather Reid in 2009, Swab and Johnson write that "some philosophers argue that competition is not really about winning, but instead, it shares the same underlying goal of Socratic philosophy, which is finding truth and wisdom in the face of unknowable uncertainty" (Swan & Johnson, 2019:147). Comparing the essence of transformative learning as finding meaning through reflection and discourse (Mezirow, 2018) to Swab and Johnson's (2019)

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consideration of competition reaching further than winning (finding meaning, "truth and wisdom" through "actions, behaviors, and arguments"), some connection emerges.

When considering the possibilities of choir competitions to develop social cohesion, it seems as if the one choral element that connects all singers, is folk music. It appears that folk music as choral repertoire, (as forming a significant prescribed genre in choir competitions) offers the best possibilities for opening doors to transformative learning and gateways leading to social cohesion.

Addleman et al. (2011:59) maintain that TLT embraces critical reflection and discussion as "cultural immersion" that opens possibilities for wider perspectives and fosters culturally responsive transformative learning. This relates to the sharing of culture through music that opens a wide range of possibilities for transformative learning; through reflecting on perceptions, consciously engaging in discourse and contributing to changes for the good of society, leading to social cohesion. One platform for sharing culture is provided by folk music as choral repertoire, to pave a potential pathway in fostering social cohesion through choral singing (Van Aswegen & Potgieter, 2010; Barrett & Vermeulen, 2019). The view of these authors leads to the conclusion that transformative learning opens possibilities where role players in choir festivals and competitions can critique their world and reflect on how they could contribute to a better world in their work as choral educators.

Taylor (2017:9) highlights the cultural-spiritual view of transformative learning as a "culturally relevant" approach in which "narrative transformation" is encouraged. Examples can include storytelling or singing of folk songs. The teacher's role, or in the context of this study, the role of the conductor as choral educator, is to facilitate the process "on a personal and social level through group inquiry" or as "collaborator with a relational emphasis on group inquiry and narrative reasoning, which [should] assist the learner in sharing" (Taylor, 2017:9). One aspect of TLT, is acknowledging, respecting and using existing knowledge and skills of role players that could be shared as part of the transformative process (Van Aswegen & Vermeulen, 2014). The value of inviting specialists as culture bearers to share their music with choirs has been discussed in chapter 2.

In the context of the study, apart from the invited culture bearers, conductors, adjudicators, singers themselves and parents can be viewed as culture bearers who could contribute to the body of repertoire and performance practices of a choir. As Mezirow (1997) states, they "have acquired a coherent body of experience – associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses – frames of reference that define their life world" (Mezirow, 1997:5). Addleman et al. (2011:57) refer to this body of experiences as funds of knowledge involving "skills and abilities that individuals acquire throughout their life experiences … and can be captured through interactions with students, their families, and community members because they are manifested through social and linguistic practices". Yosso (2005:70) conceptualises this sharing of cultural capital as "community cultural wealth". She warns that assumptions of students' backgrounds (in this context, choristers) may result in missing opportunities of shared culture-rich knowledge and skills (Yosso, 2005). Mezirow (1997:7) supports Yosso's (2005) caution by explaining that "we transform our frames of reference through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based". He warns against ethno-centrism (one example of habit of mind) as the predisposition to regard others outside one's own group as inferior, untrustworthy or otherwise less acceptable" (Mezirow, 2018:116).

Relating to a body of experience (Mezirow, 1997), cultural capital or community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Addleman et al., 2011) the researcher explores the concept of boundary objects (Tsurusaki, Calabrese, Tan, Koch & Contento, 2013) as a possible link between folk music in choir competitions and social cohesion. Tsurusaki et al. (2013:7) further developed the concept of transformative boundary objects "to capture the idea that we are interested in those reifications that not only coordinate activity and allow for knowledge integration across worlds, but also allow for the transformation of either the participating communities or of the nature of the boundary itself". Tsurusaki et al. (2013:6) explain that transformative boundary objects "hold different meanings in different social worlds, but have a structure common enough to be recognizable and serve as a means of translation across social worlds".

Although transformative boundary objects open possibilities for socio-cultural transformation, Tsurusaki et al. (2013:29) underline the responsibility of educators (in

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the context of this study, conductors of school choirs) to develop, through discourse, students' "critical consciousness" or as termed by Freire, "consciousness raising", "critical consciousness" or "conscientization" (Dirkx, 1998:2, 4). Brouckaert (2002:4) describes the potential connective role of African folk songs, from South Africa, in a transformative society:

> The songs [traditional African songs from South Africa] reflect the rich but harsh reality of social and cultural life in South Africa. As adults we understand how badly we need to change the society we live in, so that our children will have the chance to grow up free from the profound violence of racism and sexism.

Should role players regard choir competitions as one of the platforms for the development of social cohesion, then critical conscious discourse (Dirkx, 1998; Fetherston & Kelly, 2007) as a deliberate, conscious strategy is required (Torres, 2007; Taylor, 2017). Bond (2014:12) confirms that in order to "preserve the essence of a musical culture", conductors need to "engage students in a discussion about the political associations of a piece, or share information about how the music functions in society". Wang and Hansman (2019:241) acknowledge the challenging task of educators to convey transformative messages to students and community to "be successful in guiding students to develop wisdom through critical reflection and dialogue". Cranton (2016) and Bond (2014) warn that this discourse may be both uncomfortable and enlightening. Bond's view (2014:12) is that

> [w]hen working beyond notes and rhythms, students develop a deeper understanding of the music and recognize that others make meaning with sound in ways that might differ from their own. Ultimately, this may disturb, in a positive way, their previous perceptions of musicking.

Bond's observation (2014) of the discomfort in addressing racial issues is confirmed by Bradley (2006). Fetherston and Kelly (2007:268–169) maintain that critical reflection is usually motivated by "a sense of dissonance or discomfort" and that "transformation is a process precipitated by experience(s) or information that disrupt current understanding". Acknowledging and addressing power issues is one of the complex changes that characterise transformative learning (Fetherston & Kelly, 2007). Wang

and Hansman (2019:243) confirm that "people in positions of power may have the most difficulty with allowing diverse perspectives … overcoming defensiveness on hearing other perspectives is paramount for effective leadership". Fetherston and Kelly (2007:282) highlight the importance of sensitivity to the "boundaries of discursive knowings where complexities are most intense so to avoid 'doing harm' but also 'doing good'".

In a South African context of racial divisions and racial sensitivity in the post-apartheid milieu, it is worthwhile to examine the notion that we could "decolonize our understandings of multiculturalism in music education" by addressing the silence that sometimes results when we name race and racism explicitly (Bradley, 2006:2–3). Schwarzenthal (2020:323–326) agrees with Bradley's view by referring to the concept of "color evasion" (that is, ignoring or neglecting cultural differences). He argues that "color evasion promotes suppression of negative thoughts in the short term, but pre-existing prejudice and negative behavior can rebound in the long term. A complete neglect of racial and cultural categories implies that opportunities to learn about cultural diversity are not used" (Schwarzenthal, 2020:325). The title of an article by Mekawi, Todd, Yi and Blevins (2020), "Distinguishing 'I don't see color' from 'Racism is a thing of the past'" gives a picture of the viewpoint of the authors. They highlight the challenges of addressing racial colour-blindness ("the idea that sameness should be emphasized and that race, along with racism, should be minimized or denied") and power evasion, referring to "the denial of historical and continued racism" on an institutional and socio-cultural level (Mekawi et al., 2020:288, 289). To realise transformation, Bradley (2006) emphasises the importance and value of fostering the ability to address these issues:

> Learning to bring race into the dialogue is, I believe, absolutely necessary for those educating for social justice. Yet we need to find ways to work through the discomfort that talking about race invokes, so that we are able to communicate with our students better, and to help them understand the power issues inherent in racialized societies, as well as in music education practices incorporating multiculturalism (Bradley, 2006:3).

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Culturally responsive teaching can be seen as closely linked to transformative learning as a cultural connecting experience in choir singing. This is echoed by Addleman et al. (2011:56) who state that one of the key goals of teacher education should be to "enhance students' intercultural competence". For folk music to be regarded as transformative repertoire, the researcher considered Bond's (2014) proposed seven strategies in which choral education can be presented in a culturally responsive manner. Bond (2014) says that the starting point is to become familiar with the multicultural facets within the choir, as well as in the school that the choir serves. The second strategy is to build on students' strengths. This aspect relates to Yosso's (2005) notion of choir members sharing cultural capital or community cultural wealth and connecting to boundary objects (Bond, 2017). The third strategy, closely connected to the second, is that choir members are to be encouraged to embrace musical experiences at home with their families, by sharing their own folk music with the choir. Bond points out that this strategy connects school choir experiences to home experiences which are "at its heart, culturally relevant pedagogy [and] is constructivist in nature" (Bond, 2014:12). The fourth strategy pertains to the choice of repertoire in which the conductor chooses a wide variety of music, including diverse folk songs from choir members' societies. This leads to the fifth strategy in which music is presented within the socio-political context of the choir and broader society. Bond (2014) explains that

> [m]usic does not exist in a vacuum. The nature of the musical sounds, the conventions used, and the very label of "music" are culturally specific and must be presented as such. When music is presented separately from its social and political context, a choral educator deprives his or her students of a rich and multi-layered musical experience and potentially strips the music of its meaning and value (Bond, 2014:12).

The presence of text in choral music implies not only an understanding of the meaning of text, but also the context, which brings us to the sixth strategy of the conductor: to "acknowledge and share multiple perspectives" through discussion (Bond, 2014:13) Understanding the text and working on the correct pronunciation of diverse folk music is emphasised by Pohjola (1993): "audiences experience songs delivered in their own language as a mark of esteem and respect. The degree of respect is naturally

dependent on just how well the song has been rehearsed' (Pohjola 1993:113). The last strategy proposed by Bond (2014:14) focuses on the encouragement of "a sense of community" within the choir. The choir represents a small community where individuals or groups either contribute to or deter social cohesion within the choir. Bond (2014:14) argues that choirs "are uniquely positioned to establish this environment" and that while "competition and conflict can arise and negatively affect the building of community", singers' sense of "ownership" and "belief in their ability to make a meaningful contribution to the group" leads to cohesion.

3.4 Conclusion

Transformative learning theory is concerned with the longing of humans to seek meaning throughout their lives (Cranton, 2016; Taylor, 2017:5). The two main components of transformative learning are reflection and discourse (Mezirow, 2018). Reflection pertains to critical reflecting on or assessing habits of mind. Cranton (2016:20) asserts that Mezirow's six habits of mind are mainly shaped by socio-linguistic habits of mind and influenced by the culture of a community. It can be concluded that Transformation Learning Theory, therefore, involves a deliberate strategy (Taylor, 2017) to promote critical consciousness or conscientisation through open dialogue (Dirkx, 1998; Fetherston & Kelly, 2007). The process of seeking meaning, reflection and discourse often originates in an environment of tension and leads to transformative learning as changes "in which we transform problematic frames of reference" (Mezirow, 2018) to construct meaning and contribute to a better society.

In chapter 6 the researcher compares the data analysis and findings to the discussion of the literature in chapter 2, through the lens of Transformative Learning Theory. The discussion in chapter 6 aims to report on what we can learn from the experiences of choral conductors and adjudicators on how school choir competitions contribute to social cohesion. In the next chapter the design and methodology of the study are discussed.

Chapter 4: Research methodology and design

4.1 Introduction

Conducting a human science study requires of the researcher to clarify his/her philosophical stance, the expected methodology, the data generation process, and the data analysis methods. As this study involved adjudicators and conductors of choirs and their experiences in choir competitions, the above elements were used to provide the structure for this chapter.

The research question was: What can we learn from experiences of choral conductors and adjudicators on how school choir competitions contribute to social cohesion in South Africa?

In order to understand this phenomenon, the views shared by the conductors and adjudicators were examined. The researcher, therefore, relied on participants sharing their lived experiences and the knowledge they had acquired during participation in choral competitions, to shed light on the possibility of choir competitions contributing to social cohesion. The qualitative nature of this study means that "participants are not objects of the study – they are meaning bearers, meaning-makers and meaning interpreters" (Amin & Vandeyar, 2014:27). This study was designed to explore the phenomenon of experiences that choir conductors and adjudicators had accumulated during their participation in schools choir competitions. The purpose of this qualitative study, therefore, was to examine the influences of school choir activities, specifically competitions, on social cohesion.

In this chapter, the research paradigm, approach and design of this study are presented. As this was a phenomenological study, the participants, the role of the researcher, data generation strategies, method of data analysis and the concepts "trustworthiness" and "rigor" are discussed. This chapter ends with a detailed review of the limitations of the study.

4.2   Research paradigm

This study was based on the principles of the interpretivist paradigm (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Paradigms are known for their different ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (De Gialdino, 2009). Paradigms help the researcher to decide on the theory that informs all aspects of the study, such as the problems, questions, methodology, data analysis, presentation and conclusion (Badenhorst, 2010). This research was guided by the phenomenological paradigm, which was used to observe and discuss the generated data from participants' lived experiences.

Creswell (2014) and Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) emphasise that social science studies rely on a general philosophical orientation and its underlying world view. This means that they influence researchers' claims about what is out there (ontology) and how this reality can be known (epistemology). In this regard, the researcher's ontological position was that reality was relative and that each person had a subjective reality to present.

Paradigms equip researchers with the means to elicit information about human nature from human participants (Tuli, 2010). Consequently, a decision about a methodology to be used in a study depends on the chosen paradigm. It can be concluded that a paradigm is a lens through which a researcher views the participants' world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Most notable paradigms used in social sciences research are positivism, interpretivism and the critical paradigm.

Positivists are motivated by the belief that all real understanding depends on the experience of meaning and can only be developed by observation and experimentation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Positivism uses reason as the means of understanding behaviour; and explanation proceeds by way of scientific description. Mitchell, Kruger and Welma (2005) postulate that the positivist approach underlies the natural-science method of human behavioural analysis and that the study must be restricted to what can be objectively measured and evaluated independently of the individual's emotions and opinions. It means that positivists seek to provide explanations and to make predictions based on measurable outcomes. The nature of the positivist paradigm reveals that positivists do not consider the fluidity of social

conditions and the unpredictable human behaviour. The researcher could not use the positivist paradigm in this study as it would be difficult to provide the respondents with a platform to account for their experiences and substantiate their views. It should also be noted that real-life conditions are not predictable, therefore, subjecting people's views to measurements and statistics would not support this study.

4.2.1 The interpretivist paradigm

The interpretivists do not agree with the notion of one empirical world (Van Thiel, 2007). Vosloo (2014) suggests that interpretivists believe that the subject matter of social sciences is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences. This is mainly because the interpretivist paradigm is concerned with the subjective viewpoint of human beings about the environment (Marx, 2015). This study aligns with the interpretive approach model. Taking this approach enabled the researcher to elicit the personal (subjective) opinions of respondents about their experiences in choir competitions.

The choice of the interpretivist paradigm for this study had two advantages. The first, suggested by Tuli (2010), is that the researchers using this paradigm are naturalistic and they operate in the real world that is subject to natural processes, which cannot be induced or slowed down to manipulate the outcome. Secondly, the interpretivist paradigm concentrates on exploring how individuals make sense of the world in terms of the meanings and classifications they employ (Reeves, Albert, Kuper & Hodges 2008). Consequently, a different methodology is required to reach an interpretivist understanding and an explanation that would enable the social researcher to appreciate the subjective meaning of social actions. The common thread in the interpretivist paradigm is the "phenomenon", and the emphasis on qualitative, rather than quantitative reasoning. Other ways include observation, document analysis and journal entries about daily occurrences in the field. As such, interpretivist researchers normally accommodate different perspectives from participants and thus avoid a single reality (Vosloo, 2017).

In this study the interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) was chosen. Based on the above, the researcher chose to use the hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

This approach is guided by the ontological position that is rooted in the nature of being and temporality – the human experience and how it is lived (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019). Phenomenology is at the same time a philosophical attitude and a research approach (Flood, 2010). Therefore, phenomenological methodology in this research is "axioms of the generation of new knowledge" (McGregor & Murnane, 2010:420). Phenomenologists argues that human beings are not passive observers of empirical reality, but rather that they come to perceive and appreciate their universe by formulating their own biographical stories in a form that makes sense to them (Brocki & Waerden, 2006). To this extent, the researcher viewed himself as a researcher who asks questions and interacts with those who have experiences and have lived those experiences, to solicit their views. The researcher then interprets the data with objectivity and without prejudice. In this study, the primary respondents were school choir conductors and adjudicators of choir competitions whose experiences were of interest.

School choir conductors and adjudicators, by the nature of their work, are bombarded with various situational experiences, in addition to the scope of their personal experiences. The choice was made to ensure that the participants (conductors and adjudicators) were afforded a platform in which their views and experiences of choir competitions could be shared and expressed freely. The researcher conducted conversational meetings with individual respondents to investigate how they viewed the world in which they operated, how these experiences shaped their work and what they did to deal with new experiences. Maree (2012:74) explains that in phenomenological research, "the phenomenon itself (in this case the experiences of choir conductors and adjudicators) should be investigated rather than breaking it down into its constituent parts". The intention being to determine how things appear directly to us rather than through the media of cultural and symbolic structures.

The phenomenological approach involves conducting interviews with informants (Creswell, 2014). Respondents participating in this research were requested to narrate their individual experiences and how they view choral music and its role in forming social cohesion, thus constructing knowledge and meaning from experience and relationships between things, people and events (Wisker, 2008). Creswell (2014)

alludes to the fact that perceptions expressed by participants culminate in the heart of the experiences for several individuals who have all had contact with the phenomenon.

4.3 Research approach

Creswell (2014) advises researchers to consider their role in developing a research design as follows: to position oneself, collect participants' meaning, focus on a single phenomenon, bring personal values into the study, study the context or setting of participants, validate the accuracy of the findings, interpret the data, create an agenda for change and reform and collaborate with participants. The researcher has decided on phenomenology as an appropriate methodological approach for this study. It was anticipated that it would assist in developing a deeper understanding of social cohesion through experiences of conductors and adjudicators of choir competitions. To this effect, the researcher has positioned himself as the generator of data through interviewing participants, analysing documents and generating a reflective journal.

The interpretivist research approach involves the researcher being at the heart of data collection. The researcher chooses which participants are relevant for the purpose of the study. This means that the researcher is to interpret the meaning created by individuals in their realities, and from these interactions, arrive at the conclusions. Such an approach is, therefore, evolving, inductive, interpretive and naturalistic (Yilmaz, 2013). As explained earlier, in this study the researcher holds that human beings are not passive perceivers of an objective reality, but rather that they come to interpret and understand their world by formulating their own biographical stories into a form that makes sense to them. This ties well with Flood's (2010:7) view that "[p]henomenology [is] a philosophical attitude and research approach".

In the next section, the methodological approach and its use in the study is explained.

4.4 Research design: Phenomenological methodology

Glaser (2007:8) concludes that "[a] paradigm needs a methodology to arrive at 'scientific' data". Therefore, study designs are concerned with arranging study operations, including data collection, in ways that are most likely to achieve the study's

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goals (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The phenomenological approach is a relevant methodology used to explain the experiences of conductors and adjudicators participating in choir competitions in a transforming South Africa. With the phenomenological methodology, the researcher sought to understand the reality of these events from the experiencers' consciousness (Zeeck, 2012). In addition, the phenomenological methodology is "axioms of the generation of new knowledge" (McGregor & Murnane, 2010:420). Phenomenology can be described as a research methodology that seeks to explain the nature of a phenomenon by exploring it from the viewpoint of those who have encountered it (Neubauer, 2019). The study intended firstly, to enquire about the experiences of choral conductors and adjudicators on how school choir competitions may contribute to social cohesion in a transforming South Africa. Secondly, to investigate how values and assumptions of conductors and adjudicators, in light of experiences and knowledge they had acquired in participation in choral competitions, could be interpreted through the lens of Transformative Learning Theory. Thirdly, to determine how the two national South African school choir competitions (ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous) may contribute to the development of social cohesion in South Africa. In order to achieve what he set out to do, the researcher chose the phenomenological approach, as it "is interpretive" (Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter, 2011:25) and "inductive and descriptive" (Flood, 2010:10).

4.4.1 Concerns about phenomenology

Although the phenomenological methodology possesses strengths as alluded to earlier in the chapter, certain concerns have been raised regarding this approach. One of the concerns is about the unstructured nature of interview questions, which can easily reduce the credibility of the study. This may result from a lack of clarity on how the researcher asked questions and how the respondents reacted to the questions. The other concern is about power relations which can stand in the way and obscure the objectivity and credibility of the data generated in the interviews. In addition, Jamshed (2014) cautions that often recorded and hand-written interviews may be a matter of contention among the interviewer and the respondent. With regard to hand-written notes, Jamshed (2014) warns that some key points may be lost. To counter these concerns, the researcher ensured that contingency measures were put in place to avoid any of the above mishaps from happening. Data were recorded with reliable

devises and transcribed carefully to ensure correctness. The writing of the reflective journal was done in a meticulous manner to ensure reliability, in order to prevent and mitigate the concerns regarding power relations and other matters that may diminish the credibility in the study. The researcher approached the study as an outsider who sought to elicit views by engaging in conversations with respondents. The setting of participants was understood as an environment of education. The data were validated by ensuring that trustworthiness in the operations of the study is ensured by following required preventative measures such as bracketing (cf. 4.4.3), and ensuring that power relations were managed sufficiently.

4.4.2 Participants

This study was aimed at exploring the potential role that choir competitions can play in creating social cohesion in a transforming South Africa. Respondents comprised of conductors and adjudicators from different school levels and backgrounds. Some were from primary schools and others from high schools. In order to achieve the above aim, interviews to determine their perceptions of how choir competitions could contribute to social cohesion were conducted. The researcher did not include learners and administrators of choir events as respondents, since this was done in studies by Louw (2014), Barrett (2008), and Van As (2009). The researcher ensured that respondents were from urban, semi-urban and rural backgrounds, and were from different races, cultures and ethnicities. Although these aspects were not the focus of the study, they could not be ignored in the diverse South African context, especially with regard to personal views and experiences.

The researcher acknowledges that the role of the conductor and that of the adjudicator is very different. Choir conductors play a vital role in competitions with unique responsibilities, including ensuring that choirs are well prepared for the competition. They are also responsible for the welfare of the individual learners in their choirs. It is on this basis that the researcher assumed that the conductors could provide useful information on the present and historical perspectives of choirs in the competitions they served. Equally, adjudicators are responsible for assessing and evaluating performances of choirs. This duty is very sensitive and demands professional conduct beyond reproach. Adjudicators are in a position where they observe musical aspects

that choir conductors may not always realise. Adjudicators are expected to separate themselves from their personal relationships with other choir conductors to be impartial. It calls for a high degree of integrity and ethical behaviour.

Involving these two groups of respondents offered two contrasting views on how choir competitions may play a role in strengthening social cohesion. The researcher recognises the tension between involving conductors whose choirs are to be judged, on the one hand, and adjudicators who judge the choirs' performance, on the other hand. However, these juxtaposing angles strengthen the research to determine how competitions (of which the competitive nature and adjudicators' judgements could seem to be detrimental to cohesion) could have the potential to enhance social cohesion in South Africa.

4.4.3 The role of the researcher

The researcher in this study acknowledges his dual role as the researcher and an adjudicator in the ABC Motsepe competition. This posed a set of concerns with regard to ethics, bias, trustworthiness and reliability. Tufford and Newman (2012:81) caution researchers about preconceptions that might emanate from "assumptions, values, interests, emotions and theories". Due to the fact that the researcher has been an adjudicator at the ABC Motsepe choir competition in which some participants have competed with their choirs, the researcher had to acknowledge the possibility of power issues. As Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach (2009:595) point out, the challenge towards some objectivity and "self-centeredness" in qualitative research is always present: "the purpose of future qualitative work must be to reveal, counter, and transform relations of power, accepting that there is no ideal, no utopian knowing or saving 'others' or the 'world'—that research, justice, and life must be critical and involve continued struggle, diligence, and daily actions".

One way of addressing power relations, was by trying to create a relaxed environment in which participants were encouraged to feel safe and to be honest and objective in how they respond to the questions. Another way was to strive towards establishing an equal relationship in the interview process where the participant's views and contributions were valued.

On the one hand this dual relationship had to be taken into account and the researcher had to take precautions to let participants share their views voluntarily and freely. On the other hand, being in the position of having own experiences, both as conductor and adjudicator, placed the researcher in a fortunate position to have a better understanding of the phenomenon and be able to relate to experiences of conductors and adjudicators. The researcher concurs with Amin and Vandeyar (2014:27) who argue that "[k]nowledge emerging from the relationship between researcher and participant can be described as interpretations, its truth resulting from complicated, layered and textured accounts" and that the researcher "engage[s] in 'double hermeneutics' [to] construct interpretations of interpretations". The researcher viewed the opportunity to document conductors' and adjudicators' accounts on how they experienced their participation in competitions as an enriching privilege.

During this research, the researcher strove to conduct interviews in the most professional manner possible. This included to ensure that the researcher's approach to the respondents was formal, but relaxed, verifying their availability and reminding them of their rights in the process, including the fact that they could withdraw from the research at any time. The practice of removing as many aspects that could undermine the trustworthiness of a study as possible, is known as bracketing. Bracketing in the phenomenological research is a tool to shield the researcher from the accumulated effects of analysing what could be emotionally challenging content (Tufford & Newman, 2012). This helps the researcher to set aside, as far as possible, his own assumptions about the phenomenon in order to capture the respondents' own points of view (Collier-Reed, Ingerman & Berglund, 2009). Fischer (2009:583) states that bracketing includes the researcher's awareness of "personal experience, cultural factors, assumptions, and hunches that could influence how he or she views the study's data" and that "[f]or the sake of viewing data freshly, these involvements are placed in "brackets" and "shelved" for the time being as much as is possible". Tufford and Newman (2012) acknowledge that bracketing has tensions which include how to define its elements; a lacking of agreement when bracketing should be applied, who should bracket, and how it can be conducted. They also suggest that bracketing is not simply a one-time occurrence of preconceptions in abeyance, but a process of self-discovery in which buried emotions and experiences can surface. The researcher appreciates that

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bracketing is a slippery research issue, as it is never straight forward when and how it should be brought into effect.

The researcher relates to Fischer (2009) clarifying that bracketing is not a simplistic concept where personal perceptions are ruled out. Fischer explains that qualitative research is about both seeking an understanding of the views of others as well as your own.

> Bracketing is intended to help us to identify our perspectives and to examine them, sometimes then knowingly shifting stance. This ongoing reflection on our own engagement with our collection and analysis of data often is referred to as reflexive, stressing one's looking back and inward in a self-aware manner. The goals are to check whether one is imposing meanings on the data and to re-look to see what other meanings might appear (Fischer, 2009:584).

Furthermore, bracketing is not only dealing with the data, but a continuous process throughout the research leading to the data analysis and discussion of the findings (Fischer, 2009).

4.4.4 Sampling strategy

The question of sampling has always been a point of concern in research, particularly so in qualitative research. Moser and Korstjens (2018) propose that, in order to obtain rich data, qualitative research projects should begin with a well-defined sampling programme and a variety of cultures and circumstances, as well as a range of participants, including negative or extreme cases.

The criteria for determining who the research participants would be and inviting the respondents, has been limited to the group of conductors and adjudicators that the researcher knew of and who had been willing to take part in the research as voluntary participants. A total of sixty individuals had been approached and invited to take part in the research. Although it was the researcher's hope to interview all of those respondents who were invited, some withdrew due to tight schedules and others due to a lack of confidence in conceptual requirements. Moser and Korstjens (2018)

confirm similar experiences and reasons for a smaller response rate than expected. Moser and Korstjens (2018) are also of the view that qualitative researchers can sample until data saturation has been reached. As data saturation was reached, it also contributed to the smaller number of participants in this study.

Several researchers argue for quality of data collected rather than the quantity thereof. Vasileiou, Bennet, Thorpe and Young (2018) indicate that interpretive phenomenological studies, which have an idiographic aim, do not need large amounts of data. The same researchers argue that these studies can use 3 to 16 participants for a single study. Robinson (2014) confirms that samples in qualitative studies are typically limited and objective, which means that they are selected on the basis of their ability to provide richly textured details on the phenomenon under investigation.

According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), the goal of qualitative sampling is to ensure that participants are always deliberately sampled, that the sample size varies with each study, that the sample arises on the basis of additional questions that occur during data collection or data analysis, and that the inclusion and exclusion criteria or the survey sites are modified. In qualitative studies a sample of five or six may suffice if the researcher obtains corroborative data by way of validation (Cohen et al., 2011). Cresswell and Cresswell (2018:186) confirm that qualitative research is often characterised by a small number of participants. In line with the above, the sample of this study was twenty-nine respondents of which 13 were adjudicators and 16 conductors. As adjudicators had different perceptions than those of conductors, the researcher saw the need to draw on relevant data that would elucidate the adjudicators' experiences from those of the conductors. However, the adjudicators and the conductors all had rich knowledge about the history and current trends in the ATKV-Applous and the ABC Motsepe. Some respondents were even knowledgeable about both competitions.

The sample was of a multicultural nature and comprised of respondents who spoke different languages and belonged to different cultural groups (cf. figure 4.1). The sample was comprehensive as it included respondents who had been involved in school choirs for many years while others were fairly new to such competitions. This ensured that both current and past perspectives were gathered regarding both competitions.

Figure 4.1: Language groups of research participants
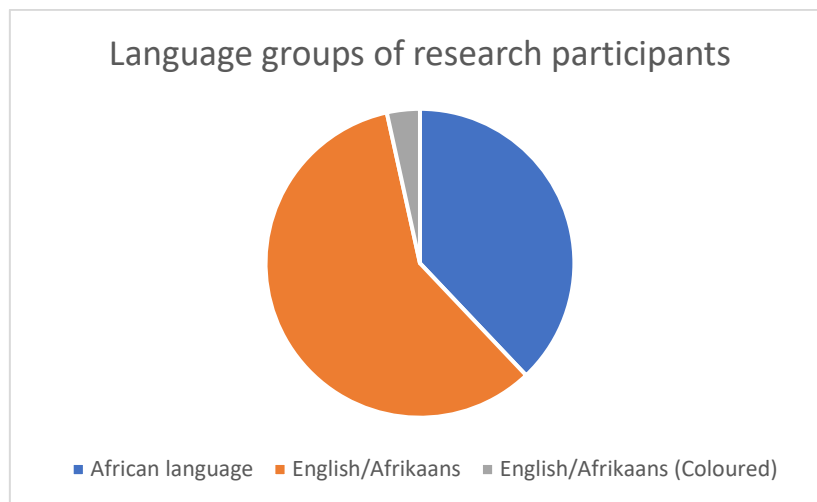
With regard to language grouping, the sample consisted of 17 English and/or Afrikaans participants, one Afrikaans and English-speaking Coloured participant and 11 participants whose mother tongue was an African language. Although the researcher was hoping to include a representative sampling group of the South African population, it was not initially a set criterion, since the researcher started off by using purposive sampling, but later strongly relied on snowball sampling. The outcome of the demographical diversity of the choirs of the participant sample offered a good representation of three groups categorised according to the mono- or multicultural nature of the choirs as well as the mother tongue of the choir members.

Although the research did not include choir member as participants, the following numbers offer insight into the choir population that the research participants worked with. The numbers also add credibility to the study as it related to a well-balanced multicultural insight offered by the participants.

Figure 4.2: Monocultural or multicultural choirs

Monocultural or mulicultural nature of choirs and mother tongues of choir members

Category	Value
Multi-cultural choir (Mother tongue of choir members: African/English/Afrikaans)	8
Mono-cultural choir (Mother tongue of choir members: English/Afrikaans)	10
Mono-cultural choir (Mother tongue of choir members: African language)	11
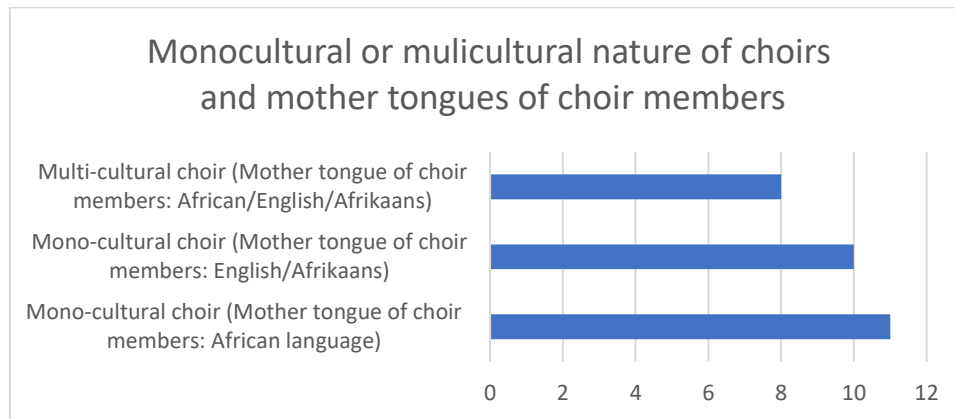
The choirs that conductor participants worked with, included 11 monocultural choirs (an African language as choir members' mother tongue), 10 monocultural choirs (English/Afrikaans as choir members' mother tongue) and eight multicultural choirs (African language/English/Afrikaans as choir members' mother tongue).

This composition of the sample presents multiple possibilities of data that are based on different and culturally specific subtleties to provide a variety of knowledge based on diverse experiences. This approach is in line with Moser and Korstjens' (2018) argument that the sampling plan is appropriate where the selected participants and settings are sufficient to provide the information needed to fully understand the phenomenon under study. The reasons for nominating two choir competitions, ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous, was motivated by the need for balance and reflection on both the opinions of Black and White choral practitioners. Due to its suitability as a useful approach for data collection in a qualitative study, non-probability sampling was preferred. Sampling in a qualitative study is deliberate and not random and as such, three non-probability sampling types, which are in line with this assertion and useful for this study, were purposive, convenient and snowball sampling (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

4.4.5 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is commonly used in a qualitative study and especially in a phenomenological study. There are two types of purposive sampling – judgement and quota sampling. Judgement sampling was preferred for its relevance. According to

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Sekaran and Bougie (2013), this sampling method includes the choice of respondents most advantageously positioned to provide the information needed. Cohen (2011) and Maree (2012) share the view that the selected participants must be those with the experience and knowledge of the phenomenon. A specific group of adjudicators and conductors were chosen specifically for their experience and depth of their knowledge about school choir competitions. Interview questions were designed in line with the main research question and arranged in themes that were used to guide the semi-structured interview questions for participants. The following themes were identified and discussed with regard to their relevance to enhancing social cohesion: Firstly, experiences of choir conductors and adjudicators and their perceptions of choral singing as a vehicle to strengthen social cohesion; secondly, the values and assumptions of conductors and adjudicators in light of the experiences and knowledge that they had acquired from their participation in choral competitions; and thirdly, the impact of rules and policies of ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous with regard to social cohesion.

Convenience sampling was used mainly with adjudicators where rare opportunities presented themselves at competitions. Cohen et al. (2011) agree that sampling convenience includes selecting the nearest individuals to serve as participants and following the procedure until the appropriate sample size is obtained. Some leads were suggested and where the need arose, these respondents were invited to participate. The snowball effect was achieved through these leads.

4.4.6 Eligibility criteria and site sampling

Eligibility of respondents is essential in any study. According to Martínez-Mesa, González-Chica, Duquia, Bonamigo and Bastos (2016:326), the researcher should ensure that "the target population corresponds to the entire set of subjects whose characteristics are of interest to the research team". In this study, the researcher ensured that participants chosen for interviews were suitable and known in the environment of school choir competitions. Their track record in choir competitions and their credentials were verified by consulting extensively and observing the possible participants during competitions.

4.4.7 Exclusion criteria

Adjudicators and conductors who had never participated in the two competitions were excluded as participants.

4.4.8 Data collection plan and techniques

Collection of data should be meticulous and relevant to the problem in the study, employing approaches like interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions, narratives and case histories (De Vaus, 2001). Moser and Korstjens (2018) advise that researchers should always be careful when deciding on data collection methods because the data collection of the qualitative analysis does not have a fixed structure and is, therefore, versatile. In general, studies that draw upon a phenomenological approach gather data in the form of in-depth semi-structured or unstructured interviews and personal documents such as diaries (Moser & Korstjens, 2018), as was the case in this study.

In this study, interviews and semi-structured questions were used to guide the discussion. The interview sessions were scheduled for one hour, but in some cases the sessions lasted longer than an hour. In these sessions, the researcher ensured to allay any fears and doubts about the research by first introducing himself and providing the purpose of the interview. Respondents were allowed to introduce themselves and where required to explain their involvement in choir music. They were also allowed to decide whether they would like to continue with the session once the introductions had been done. The data collection plan is presented in the next section.

4.4.9 Data collection

The researcher was guided by phenomenological methodology to decide on the data that should be collected, the tools that would be employed and how data should be analysed and interpreted. The researcher modelled the data collection plan of this study to that of Vithal and Jansen (2010) (cf. table 4.1).

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Table 4.1: Data collection plan in line with Vithal and Jansen's (2010:22) model

Questions	Data collection plan followed in this research
Why were data collected?	Data were collected to examine the influence of school choir activities, specifically competitions, on social cohesion.
What was the research strategy?	The study was dependent on a phenomenological research design where the focus was on participants' accounts of how they perceived their participation in choral singing and choral competition. The study was anchored in the framework of Transformative Learning Theory. With this strategy the researcher collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014:76). To this extent, document analysis, face-to-face interviews and insight from research notes were used.
Who (or what) were the sources of the data?	Choir conductors and adjudicators, chosen for their experience and knowledge about choir competitions, were sources of data.
How many of the data sources were accessed?	29 respondents of whom 13 were adjudicators and 16 were conductors, were involved.
Where were the data collected?	Arrangements were made to ensure that respondents were comfortable. Venues suitable and convenient for the respondents were chosen. Some of the venues included schools from which they worked, restaurants and some homes.
How often were the data collected?	Once the participants had agreed to answer the questions, the interview schedule was forwarded to participants via email. Every participant was interviewed once. In case of uncertainties, the interviews were followed up – in some cases with telephone conversations.
How were the data collected?	Data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, document analysis and entries from a research journal.

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Justify this plan for data collection.	Face-to-face interviews allowed for a less formal setup. It offered the researcher to rephrase questions and probe more if the need arose. Respondents were given the opportunity to share more information if they so wished. The three data collection strategies (interviews, document analysis and a research journal entries) created an opportunity to get varied perspectives from the data, which resulted into triangulation. The participants' views were documented without revealing their names.

4.4.10 Data processing

The object of data processing is to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion, which should be transparent, rigorous, detailed and always preserve the participant's responses as authentically as possible (Noble & Smith, 2013). The data processing approach used in this study was the inductive approach, one which involved analysing data with little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework. The actual data were used to derive the structure of analysis (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). These scholars further clarify that inductive data analysis requires a method of transcript analysis, the identification of the themes within the data and the selection of examples from the texts. This approach resonated with the six-steps approach suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006:2), which the researcher used as a guide to develop the process. The six steps are: "1) becoming familiar with data; 2) generate initial codes; 3) search for themes; 4) review themes; 5) refine themes; and 6) write up". The six steps are applied below to indicate how the researcher dealt with the data.

Step 1: Becoming familiar with data

The first step was to peruse the data from the ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe documents, from the transcription of the interviews and the data from the journal entries, to become familiar with the data. In the second reading, the researcher paid attention to the respondents' use of language and tone and feeling to gain a deeper understanding and derive meaning from the context of both words and attitudes, and

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from the interpretation of the documents included in the analysis. The researcher wanted to observe how each of the participants interpreted the possible role of choral music in fostering social cohesion. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to explore what influenced certain beliefs that the participants had shared and how they come to certain conclusions.

Step 2: Generate initial codes

The second reading of the transcript involved underlining, marking and making certain meanings from the data. The researcher then started coding the data to be able to understand and make meaning out of the data. Statements, expressions, views and surprising inputs were selected and written in the margins next to statements. Sentences or phrases were underlined and labelled or coded. This generated open codes.

Step 3: Searching for themes

Codes were then closely re-examined to search for any duplications or parallels. Common or similar codes were collapsed and merged and related codes were grouped and put under one category. Other open codes were reordered and categorised into new closed codes which reflected the research questions and purpose. The final part of coding included observing the codes to see whether any patterns, relationships and meanings could be classified into related groups, which yielded themes.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

The first set of themes that emerged were re-examined and some were dropped due to their irrelevance to the research question and purpose. Thereafter, final themes were determined.

Step 5: Refining themes

The researcher identified themes that were important, interesting, and unexpected and used them to address the research questions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3353). Concepts emerged in categories/open codes, which were transformed into themes that were carefully summarised and synthesised to indicate what was happening in the data.

Step 6: Writing up

The writing up of the research report is mainly dealt with in chapter 5, where the data analysis is discussed. This was the final stage of data processing, which included giving an account of the findings. The thematic content analysis "offers an accessible and theoretically-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:2). Instead of simply summarising the data, Maguire and Delahunt (2017) advise that it should be interpreted thematically and that the key interview questions should not merely be converted into themes, as this would deprive the researcher of being fully engaging in the data analysis. The data presented in this study were rigorously analysed and the themes presented in this report are evidence to this. It should be noted that the thematic presentation in this report was both semantic and latent, which means that data were interpreted according to what the respondents meant in their own words and the inferences that the researcher had made from their reactions and language use that may have had deeper meaning not mentioned explicitly (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

4.4.10.1 Documents

Documents from both competitions were included in the document analysis. The ABC Motsepe documents included the following: 1) The ABC Motsepe protocol for the organisation, management, coordination and monitoring of school music competitions and/or festivals for public schools (schools' protocol); 2) The ABC Motsepe participation rules with prescription; 3) DBE annual reports; and 4) the keynote speeches of Ministers of Education between 2003 and 2019. The ATKV-Applous documents included the following: 1) The 2019 ATKV-Applous rules booklet.; 2) *Die*

ATKV as kultuurorganisasie binne 'n veranderende Suider-Afrikaanse samelewing, by Pieter Möller (2006); and 3) unpublished documents including an email in which officials from the ATKV-Applous explained some transformative aspects and the historical background of the competition.

A thorough analysis and examination of the documents led to themes which the researcher then used to present the data. The themes are as follows: 1) the background of the organisation; 2) policies, rules and administration; 3) participation; 4) political and cultural influences; 5) prescribed and selected repertoire; 6) instrumental accompaniment; 7) financial implications and 8) competitive nature of the choir events and collaboration as a result of preparation for participation. These themes were also used to guide the process of data interpretation. After the analysis, the data were tested against the indicators of social cohesion listed under section 5.1.

4.4.10.2 Interviews

The age of respondents ranged between 30 and 70 years and their experiences in choral conducting and adjudication ranged between 10 and 35 years. Adjudicator respondents were generally older, mostly between 40 and 70 years, while conductors were much younger, ranging between 30 and 50. Although the mix of males and females was skewed towards females, this did not influence data in any way. Some of the respondents were both conductors and adjudicators due to their long service in choir competitions. This was very useful because they shared experiences that added value and complemented the data exponentially.

Semi-structured questions (cf. Addendum 2) were used in the face-to-face interviews to gather primary data from conductors and adjudicators. These were open-ended questions prepared to help the researcher to keep focus on the objectives of the study while conducting the interviews. The questions were mainly used to guide the interviews and they were adapted and restated during the interviews – depending on the need and circumstances. Techniques of questioning included probing to clarify and ascertaining some of the inputs made by the respondents. Questions were asked in any order depending on the atmosphere and other factors. Many interviews were held in private places, which included the respondent's homes or workplaces, which were

more natural settings, unlike in a laboratory (Stewart et al., 2008). The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour, although some interviews exceeded that. A digital recording device was used to record the data to ensure that the data could be transferred to a computer for safekeeping and backup. Each recorded interview was saved under the respondent's name. This was done to avoid any confusion. The themes that emerged from the interview data were born from painstakingly connecting the different ends and pieces of the threads of data together. The following themes emerged from the interview data: 1) Early platforms of music; 2) Conducting without prior acquired skills; 3) Learning from peers and professionals; 4) Experiencing African indigenous music; 5) Choice of prescribed and selected repertoire; 6) Social cohesion and choirs; 7) The role of school management in choirs and 8) Perspectives of choir conductors and adjudicators on change. These themes have been analysed and are discussed in chapter 5.

4.4.10.3 Research journal

As noted by Friedemann, Mayorga and Jimenez (2011), a research journal is a useful tool for data collection. They argue that keeping field journals bring to the fore important information that would have remained hidden. A journal is useful because it serves as a memory bank when the researcher needs to reflect on the study. Borg (2001) supports this idea and insists that journal writing provides researchers with an effective way of writing about, engaging with and developing a greater understanding of any aspect of the research process. In this study, the researcher used a reflective research journal to record certain incidents that he had encountered during the fieldwork for this study. Some of the encounters included conversations, observations and roles that the researcher was invited to perform. Events were recorded in the journal to develop a story line of this journey. This proved to be very useful since it helped to reconfigure the interview questions better and change the researcher's perspective about certain prior beliefs. Through the journal, the researcher was able to notice some subtle differences and similarities in the way in which ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe were managed.

4.5 Trustworthiness of the study

For interpretative research, trustworthiness is the criterion by which the quality of the study and its rigour are measured (Collier-Reed, 2009). The concept "trustworthiness" is still subject of debate for many researchers, especially with regard to qualitative studies (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017; Creswell, 2014; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). According to Vasileiou et al. (2018) and Kalu and Bwalya (2017), trustworthiness is usually related to the validity and reliability of the research project. Trustworthiness also refers to the consistency, reliability and veracity of qualitative research findings (Cypress, 2017). It is a form of proactive means to ensure quality and reliability in the study. In order to make a qualitative study credible, the behaviour and expertise of the researcher are of crucial importance (Golafshani, 2003), as opposed to quantitative studies where credibility relies on the creation of instruments. The other element that is closest to trustworthiness is triangulation. According to Cohen et al. (2011), triangulation refers to the use of two or more data collection methods in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. The main goal of triangulation techniques in the social sciences is to explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour, by examining it from various perspectives. (Golafshani, 2003) concludes that triangulation is a technique that can be used to enhance the validity and reliability of analysis or evaluation of results. In this study documents were analysed; interviews were conducted and notes were kept in a personal journal. This helped the researcher to study the two competitions from various angles thus gaining a comprehensive understanding of their nature.

The researcher aligns with Collier-Reed (2009) that the typical capacity for phenomenological study is collective thinking, building potentially accumulative awareness, which may be a factor leading to a positive shift in society. It was, therefore, the purpose of the interviews to collect data on the perceptions and experiences of conductors and adjudicators, to make sense of how they viewed participation in choir competitions and the potential influence thereof in social cohesion in a transforming South Africa. To ensure that the data collected in this study were trustworthy, the researcher also studied the documents from both competitions and developed a journal that was used to capture all the unforeseen developments in the course of the study.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Arifin (2018) insist that participants' participation in any study should be voluntary, that participants should understand what they are agreeing for, and that they should be mature enough to take responsibility for their decisions. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) advise that ethical considerations should be taken into account when data are collected. They tabled a set of ethical principles that need to be considered when collecting data. The researcher adhered to these principles by firstly ensuring that no harm came to participants. In this regard the researcher ensured that interviews were conducted in safe places, especially if the interviews were conducted outside the participants' own workplaces or homes. Secondly, respecting the dignity of research participants. Participants were accorded the necessary respect. The researcher first introduced himself and informed the participants about the study in an email, after which he waited for the participants' responses. He ensured to respect the participants' choices for times, venues and circumstances. Thirdly, the researcher protected the participants' privacy by not mentioning their names anywhere in the study. The participant's name was replaced with pseudonyms e.g. Respondent 1, 2 or 3. In instances where the participants disclosed information of a confidential nature, the researcher paraphrased such information if the information was referred to in the research report. The researcher also kept the collected data and transcriptions safe. He ensured that the transcripts, recorded data and any other information such as name lists and addresses were kept in a safe. According to Arifin (2018), it is crucial to consider ethical concerns to maintain a balance between the possible risks of the study and the likely benefits thereof. In the last instance, after having transcribed the data, the researcher requested the participants to verify that the data had been transcribed correctly, which is known as member checking.

During the interview sessions the researcher ensured that participants were informed about their rights as participants. They were informed that they could choose not to answer certain questions and that they had the right to withdraw from the research if they chose to do so. The participants were also informed that feedback on the progress of the project would be provided to them and that they would be informed about any publications that relate to the study. In the analysis of the competition documents, all

ethical considerations were taken into account, and confidential information was handled as such.

4.7 Limitations of the study

Some limitations of the study include the following. The number of participants was determined by the goodwill of conductors and adjudicators who were invited, as well as those who agreed to participate voluntarily in the research. The researcher had no control over this, as he had to identify school choir conductors whom he had not known. This is where snowball sampling proved very helpful, as it increased the number of willing participants from different cultural backgrounds. The pool of adjudicators in South Africa is limited. Although the insights gained by the participants shed valuable light on the research problem, the outcomes cannot be generalised and applied to the wider South African choral community. Since many of the participants, especially the available adjudicators, lived in different parts of the country, we agreed to conduct some of the interviews after choir events. Some participants agreed to participate but owing to prolonged hours of the competitions, they failed to honour the appointments.

Apart from the limitations mentioned in chapter 1, more limitations came to light – especially during the researcher's fieldwork. One of these limitations was the possible interferences of power relations between the researcher and the respondents, especially when interviewing conductors. Bracketing was suggested as the solution to this challenge. Tufford & Newman (2012) advise researchers to use the bracketing approach to eliminate the reliability of the analysis being compromised. The fact that the researcher in this study collected, collated and analysed the data could subject this study to what Starks and Trinidad (2007) call, preconceptions. These are aspect such as assumptions, values, interests, emotions and theories held by the researcher. Such misconceptions could also emanate from the researcher's close proximity to adjudicators thus causing them to lack objectivity in order to please the researcher. Although bracketing has been suggested as remedy to these problems, it was important to highlight them as limitations.

One of the emerging themes in this study was the role of cultural differences in choir competition and adjudication practices. For example, a Black Motswana or amaZulu,

or a White English or Afrikaans conductor or adjudicator may not view music, including folk music, within the same cultural context. The fact that participation of respondents was not a big number, this can contribute to the limitations of the study because some cultural groups might complain that their views were not included. Thus, the study may be seen to not adequately represent the diverse views of conductors and adjudicators about how choir competitions contribute to social cohesion.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the design and the theoretical aspect and research approach were discussed. The interpretive phenomenological paradigm of the study was clarified. The ontological, epistemological and research methodology guiding the research were explained. The methods and procedures were tabled and justified. Purposive sampling, snowballing and convenient sampling were presented as sampling strategies. The chapter ended with a discussion of the trustworthiness, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. In chapters 5 and 6 the focus is on the data analysis and the discussion of the findings.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and findings

5.1 Document analysis

This phenomenological study was designed to investigate the role that school choir competitions may play in the creation of social cohesion in South Africa. The ultimate outcome was to determine what can be learnt from the experiences of choral conductors and adjudicators in the two main choir competitions in the school sector, ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous, with regard to how school choir competitions contribute to social cohesion.

The role of an interpretivist researcher is to analyse primary data in a way that gives it meaning by being transparent, rigorous and thorough (Noble & Smith, 2013). Semi-structured interviews, document analysis and the insights generated from research journal notes were used to collect qualitative data.

In this chapter the responses to the first secondary question, "What are the experiences of choir conductors and adjudicators and their perceptions of choral singing as a vehicle to strengthen social cohesion?" are discussed. This is followed by as discussion of the findings related to the third research question: "How do the two school choir competitions (ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous) contribute to the development of social cohesion in South Africa"?

Numerous documents were analysed as part of the document analysis. The documents analysed pertaining to the ABC Motsepe competition included the following. Firstly, The ABC Motsepe protocol for the organisation, management, co-ordination and monitoring of school music competitions and/or festivals for public schools. This is a policy framework that was developed to provide guidelines about choir competitions in South African public schools. It came into effect in 2001 (South Africa, 2000:2) The second document analysed was the ABC Motsepe participation rules with prescription. The third and fourth documents were the annual reports of the DBE and key-note speeches by the Ministers of Education between 2003 and 2019. Collectively, these documents offer insight into, from government's perspective, how

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policies shape the way in which choral music competitions are organised and managed.

The documents analysed pertaining to the ATKV-Applous competition, included the following. Firstly, the 2019 ATKV-Applous rules booklet. This document contains rules and guidelines for the competition. The second document was: *Die ATKV as kultuurorganisasie binne 'n veranderende Suider-Afrikaanse samelewing*[12] by Möller (2006). Due to the non-availability of comprehensive historical content about ATKV-Applous, the researcher relied heavily upon the latter document as well as on personal email correspondence with the organisers of ATKV-Applous.

After having studied the above-mentioned documents thoroughly, the researcher arrived at eight organisers according to which the competitions could be analysed: 1) the background of the organisation; 2) administration and participation; 3) political and cultural influences; 4) prescribed and selected repertoire; 5) instrumental accompaniment; 6) partnerships and financial support; 7) the competitive nature of the choir events and 8) collaboration as a result of preparation for competitions. The researcher also used the social cohesion indicators found in the literature (cf. chapter 2) to discuss the contribution of the documented content towards social cohesion.

5.2 Analysis of ABC Motsepe documents

In the following sections the data derived from the analysis of the documents pertaining to the ABC Motsepe competition are discussed according to the eight organisers mentioned in 5.1.

5.2.1 Background of the organisation

The South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE), later re-named ABC Motsepe was established in 2016 in line with the ANC government's agenda of "deconstruction and destruction of the repugnant apartheid organs of the state and everything that the

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[12] English translation: The ATKV as cultural organisation within a changing Southern African society.

apartheid ethos stood for" (South Africa, 2000:2). Prior to 2001, school choir music was managed separately in different institutions. School music competitions and/or festivals were organised according to racial or cultural lines, with Black schools concentrating on singing and White schools on instrumental music (South Africa, 2000:2).

ABC Motsepe was established in accordance with section 3(4)(b) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (No. 27 of 1996). Empowered by section 3 of this Act, Prof. Kader Asmal, Minister of Education from 1999 to 2004, invoked subsection 4(b) to establish a framework that could be used to determine the organisation, management and governance of the National Education System. This paved way for Government Notice no. 21697: *Schools protocol for the organisation, management, co-ordination and monitoring of school music competitions and/or festivals for public schools in South Africa* (South Africa, 2000). This notice enabled the Minister to set up a new public-school choir competition, officially launched in 2001 under the name *Tirisano*[13] School Choir Eisteddfod (TISCE). The establishment of this Eisteddfod was part of Minister Asmal's education transformation plan, which established a policy structure for the transformation of the South African education and training system. This policy framework was premised to break all barriers to learning and to create an opportunity for all public school to participate in school choral music competitions.

In 2005, the protocol was amended and the *Tirisano* School Choir Eisteddfod became known as the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE). In 2016 the name was changed to ABC Motsepe, in accordance with an agreement between the DBE and the Motsepe Foundation. The promulgation of the protocol founded the South African School Choir Eisteddfod as the official umbrella body for all choir competitions for public schools in South Africa. This deposed all pre-existing choir competitions in the public-school sector and became the sole national competition for all public schools. This means that all South African public-school choir competitions resorted under the authority of the Minister of Education since 2000.

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[13] *Tirisano* is the Setswana word meaning "let us work together".

In accordance with the protocol (South Africa, 2000), ABC Motsepe's purpose was to "promote unity in diversity, national reconciliation, positive values, a new South African national identity, social transformation, and social cohesion among school-going South African youth". In its twenty years of existence, ABC Motsepe has been hailed as the flagship programme within the DBE. Angie Motshekga, the current Minister of Basic Education, explains the purpose and context of ABC Motsepe as:

> […] an act of redress, therefore an act of cultural restitution and restoration. As we know, we come from a situation wherein our indigenous heritage was dismissed and stigmatised as 'primitive' curiosities of 'underdeveloped peoples' with very little, if any cultural significance. The act of restitution and restoration through choral music is our quest as a free people in our country of birth to promote unity in our diversity, nation-building, reconciliation, and social cohesion among young South Africans of school-going age (South Africa, 2016).

The above extract provides the objective of ABC Motsepe as an organisation committed to promote a culture of common national norms and values among school learners. ABC Motsepe can also be regarded as an agency intended to build social harmony owing to its status as a national forum open to all public schools. This may also mean that ABC Motsepe opens doors to school choirs that have never participated in public school competitions. Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Education from 2004 to 2009, acknowledged that the *Tirisano* School Choral Eisteddfod (currently known as ABC Motsepe) has broadened the spectrum of school music and claimed that, in doing so, it had contributed to the strengthening of unity in South Africa (South Africa, 2004). The rise in the level of involvement of diverse cultural and ethnic groups, traditionally known for non-participation in public schools' choral music, was noted in the 2006/7 DoE report (South Africa, 2006/7:56). Subsequently, the 2013 report also noted that ABC Motsepe had resulted in a rise in school attendance, which contributed to an improvement in the quality of basic education (South Africa, 2013).

5.2.2 Administration and participation

In this section, the management and bureaucratic structures with hierarchical powers, as well as the rules for participation and the functional spheres of the ABC Motsepe are outlined. In hierarchical order, these structures are as follows: Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOMM), National Coordinating Committee (NCC), Provincial Coordinating Committees (PCC), District Coordinating Committees (DCC) and Area projects. Each structure monitors and oversees the one below it (South Africa, 2010).

The ABC Motsepe is governed by a set of rules presented in a document, *Participation rules and prescriptions* (South Africa, 2017). In this document it is also stated that ABC Motsepe is aimed at fostering unity in diversity, national reconciliation, social change and social cohesion among South African school-going youth.

Notwithstanding the stated purpose of the ABC Motsepe and the speech by the Minister wherein the above purpose was reiterated, some of the rules in the participation rules and prescriptions booklet may pose a threat to this well intended purpose of this school choir competition. Some examples of such are quoted from the 2017 booklet. These rules are listed as follows: Rule 2.6 stated that, "no category other than those determined through these participation rules will be introduced in any year of the competition". This is problematic, because schools are no longer approaching choral music from a narrow approach. Some schools may wish to participate in a choral style that may not be accommodated in the rule book. This rule may, therefore, be a barrier for such choirs which have discovered other new and trendy approaches to choral singing. Owing to the fact that the aim of the protocol was to accommodate all public schools, this rule may contradict that ideal.

Rule 2.7 indicated that only educators in the employ of the participating schools would be allowed to conduct or direct a choir from that school (paraphrased). This rule may negatively exclude those schools who do not have a staff member who can run and manage a choir. Thus, defeating the sole purpose of the protocol, which is to ensure that all public schools participate.

Rule 3.3 explained that the ABC Motsepe was an event organised, managed and coordinated for school-going youth, and no one else but bona fide learners of the participating schools could form part of the participating choir, and no exchange of learners would be allowed at any point of participation. The researcher regards this rule is short-sighted in that some schools do not have learners who can sing certain voices required in the prescribed songs. Such schools may find it difficult to form a proper choir with a balanced representation of voices. Neighbouring schools with such problems may wish to combine their choirs to meet this requirement, but the rule does not permit this. Such schools may not get a fair opportunity, even if they were to send choirs to the competitions.

Paragraph 2.1 in the protocol (2000) explains that school music competitions and/or festivals will include events organised for primary and secondary public schools. This rule prohibits any choir not from a public schools from participating, while the protocol is explicit that the school choir competition should promote wide participation to encourage social cohesion and nation-building among the youth. The rules stated above could become barriers that prevent schools from entering their choirs in the competition.

A lack of financial resources was also noted as one of the hindrances that could undermine the intended purpose of the protocol which was to ensure that all public schools gain access to the school choir competition. The 2013 and 2016 reports showed that schools from the Limpopo province could not attend the 2013 National Championship due to financial constraints (South Africa, 2013). The same also applied to schools from the Northern Cape (South Africa, 2016). The above examples show how some administrative issues such as rules and financial distribution could threaten chances for learners to gain access and be part of the new face of choral participation.

5.2.3 Political and cultural influences

As pointed out above, the ABC Motsepe was instituted by former Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal. He was driven by a political objective to reverse the social ills from the previous dispensation, which were characterised by racial divisions and cultural

differences. This intention can be seen in the preamble to the protocol, where he declares that

> I, Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, after consultation with the relevant national consultative bodies with a specific interest in school music competitions and/or festivals, hereby announce in terms of section 3(4)(b) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (No. 27 of 1996), the protocol for the organisation, management, coordination and monitoring of school music competitions and/or festivals for public schools (South Africa, 2000:1).

In this context, the protocol may be seen as a unifying instrument intended to reverse divisions in school choir competitions, expressed in a political mandate born in the spirit of *tirisano*, which the Minister used to propel his political vision of education. The *tirisano* vision was a call from the Minister for action and mobilisation of all South Africans to work together to create a South African education and training framework for the 21st century. From the protocol it would seem that the minister was convinced that all public-school structures accounting for school choir music agreed to the undertaking and, as such, ABC Motsepe should be seen as an authentic body based on the will of the people. Paragraph 1.8 in the protocol states that

> [t]his document reflects consensus reached on its main principles at two national workshops, which were attended by representatives from both national and provincial Departments of Education, national and provincial departments responsible for arts and culture […] (South Africa, 2000:n.p.).

The protocol shows that ABC Motsepe is an entity that is supported by other departments, such as the Departments of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology as well as teachers' unions. The political influence on the ABC Motsepe is expressed as the Minister of Education annually delivers the keynote address at the final of the ABC Motsepe competition. An extract from Minister Angie Motshekga's 2019 address is presented below:

It gives me a great pleasure and immense pride to be standing here today and addressing you. Programme Director, South Africa is better place to live in today compared to pre-1994. Over the last 25 years, steps have been taken by various ANC-led administrations to build a South Africa of our dreams. Some big democratic milestones that we have achieved as a country are to some routine and we may be tempted to take them for granted. Some of these big-ticket items include the fact that every five years we hold national and provincial elections that are credible, free and fair. We have had a civilian government, a government chosen by the people for the last 25 years and into the future. We are no longer a pariah of the world community, but a source of envy because of our constitution. Our constitution, which guarantees equal human rights for all, turns 23 years this year and is still considered the most progressive in the world (South Africa, 2019:n.p.).

The quote above demonstrates the magnitude of the political nature of The ABC Motsepe. The context of the expression offers insight into what the ABC Motsepe stands for. The prescribed themes for the competition clearly demonstrate the national interest and the vision of the ruling party. Examples are: "Celebrating 60 Years of the Freedom Charter through Music" (2015 theme); "Commemoration of the 1976 Youth Uprisings through Music" (2016 theme); "Celebrating the Centenary of OR Tambo through Music" (2017 theme); "Celebrating the Centenary of Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu through music" (2018 theme), and "Celebrating 25 years of our democracy" (2019) theme. In some cases, prescribed works were specifically composed to highlight these themes. An example of such a composition is *Vela Mandela, Vela Sikubone*[14] by T.T. Mahlangeni. The song is about honouring Nelson Mandela and was composed in line with the 2018 theme, "Celebrating the Centenary of Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu through music".

5.2.4 Prescribed and selected repertoire

The rules of the ABC Motsepe do not allow choice of repertoire, except for the folklore/indigenous category. By limiting choirs to the prescribed music, choirs are

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[14] Isixhosa for "Appear Mandela, let us see you".

robbed of the opportunity to perform the music they prefer and that the choir can perform successfully. The NCC reserves the right to determine the music to be prescribed for primary schools – infants (Grades R–2), Foundation Phase (Grades 3–4), Intermediate Phase (Grades 5–7) and also the most appropriate voice combinations for such schools (Rule 3.7). The rule continues to be enforced, despite the fact that numerous choirs do not have children who are mature enough to sing certain voice parts. The rule further states that care should be taken to ensure that age appropriate music is prescribed. However, on examination of a few songs, the researcher found that this requirement does not seem to be considered. *I love mom,* composed by Dineo Diale, which was prescribed for Grades R to 2 (South Africa, 2016), is the perfect example of how learners' abilities were not taken into account in song choice. Although the lyrics of the song suit children of a young age, the music comprises of leaps, chromatics and semitones. Children in Grades R to 2 are in the age bracket of 5 to 7 years. At this age, learners are still developing their aural skills and minor intervals and leaps in music should be avoided. Learners in this age group are more comfortable with stepwise melodic contours in music composed in a pentatonic scale as opposed to diatonic and minor scales. *Elijah Rock* by R. Emerson (South Africa, 2016:24–32), was prescribed for farm schools (Grades 5–7). Children in these grades are in the age bracket of 11 to 13 years. This composition had the potential to present several challenges to choirs in this age group from a deep rural background. First of all, the song required piano accompaniment. Many schools, such as farm schools, do not have pianos nor do they have accompanists to accompany the choir. Secondly, the range of the song is too low, which is likely to be difficult for learners in this age group.

The third example is the work, *Let they hand be strengthened* by G.F. Handel (South Africa. 2016). Firstly, this is a choral composition meant for adult voices composed for a specific setting such as a cathedral or a church. Secondly, the song is written for SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices) which may not suit school choirs where the learners' voices have not yet developed into tenors and/or basses. This song was prescribed for learners in the secondary A category. This category accommodates learners in the age bracket of 14 and 15 years. Learners in the secondary B category are in the age bracket of 15 to 17 years and in spite of some development of their voices, they are not very comfortable to sing songs such as *Quoniam tu solus sanctus*

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& Cum Santo Spiritu (Gloria RV 589) by A. Vivaldi. This song was composed with adults in mind.

The researcher also noticed that some of the recommended songs were in foreign languages, such as German or French, which would pose major problems for school choirs of which the learners are unfamiliar with these languages.

In the ABC Motsepe competition, the African category is part of the prescribed repertoire. Choirs from different African cultures and White groups may face difficulties because they have little or no insight into the languages and criteria set out in the rules for this category. It is also clear that ABC Motsepe prescribes a great deal of operatic music for soloists, duets, quartets, sextets and Western oratorios. The researcher acknowledges the fact that this allows conductors, choirs and audiences to gain exposure to a rich source of classical Western music, but conductors and learners are largely untrained and not exposed to such music in their everyday lives. Many schools do not have the relevant skills and instruments to meet the requirements embedded in this category of music. However, choirs who might not feel comfortable performing these works, have no choice, as these works are prescribed.

5.2.5 Instrumental accompaniment

The researcher observed that rapid reforms were introduced in the ABC Motsepe music programme. According to Rule 5.8 from the *Participation and Prescriptions Book* (South Africa, 2017), school choral ensembles and soloists in the lower levels and provincial championships, may use piano accompaniment in rendering the prescribed music. This included piano accompaniment becoming mandatory at the national championship within a short space of time. Just a few years later, orchestral accompaniment was introduced and is now compulsory at provincial and national level – regardless of the former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor's acknowledgement in her 2004 keynote address, that most schools did not have the appropriate facilities for school enrichment programmes such as music. Piano and orchestral accompaniment are scarce and expensive services and, in most cases, not available in the rural areas. According to Rule 3.13, accompaniment is also required in the folklore category. Although Rule 5.8 is not an instruction, many choirs seem to believe that without

accompaniment their rendition will be inferior. Most schools need to go out of their way to look for musicians who can help with interpretation – particularly of songs that are in languages foreign to most learners. This requires specialised people with a clear understanding of pronunciation, knowledge of the language structure and insight into the context of the songs.

5.2.6 Partnerships and financial support

ABC Motsepe is a government funded school competition. According to Rule 3.16, the NCC is responsible for transport, accommodation and catering for all provincial champions participating at the national championship. Choirs that would like to participate in the ABC Motsepe are not expected to pay a fee, which includes registering educators to attend workshops (Rule 4.1b) (South Africa, 2017). In order to increase opportunities for more participation, financial support is garnered from private businesses and multinational bodies such as the United Nations. According to the DBE's 2013 Annual Report, disadvantaged groups, for example, from poor, non-fee-paying schools and farm schools were provided with dedicated training that targeted teachers, learners and administrators.

5.2.7 ABC Motsepe as a competition

According to reports by the Department of Basic Education, ABC Motsepe is a popular competition and enjoys great following. The national final championship is even regarded as the apex event of the DBE's school enrichment programmes (South Africa, 2013). However, the researcher has observed that the same cannot be said about the presence of choirs from the White and Coloured groups. Schools from this population groups don't seem to be keen to enter the competition. Sometimes one choir shows up at the national final and performs a song from the own choice category. Once they have rendered their one item, they would rather leave instead of sticking around with others. It would seem that they are not keen to integrate with others.

ABC Motsepe, as with other competitions, is adjudicated by a panel of individuals, regarded as experts in the field of choral singing. Standards of adjudication are uniform and make no exceptions for choirs with special circumstances and needs. This means

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that all choirs are compared, ranked and labelled regardless of their situation. A category for participants with challenges would be commendable and would enhance inclusivity in the competition. However, such a category would present its own challenges in the sense that choirs could be treated as if their disabilities were all the same. Deaf choirs, for example, are usually adjudicated according to the same criteria as choirs with learners who suffer from other disabilities.

The ABC Motsepe competition awards prizes of large sums of money. In the 2017 ABC Motsepe national championship, the top four choirs were awarded prizes of R200 000,00, R160 000,00, R155 000,00 and R117 500,00 respectively. Other prizes included Best Conductor (Primary Schools), Best Conductor (Secondary Schools), and Best Soloist. In these categories the prize for first place was R10 000,00, for second place, R7 500,00 and for third place, R5 000,00. Trends show that choirs from KwaZulu-Natal, followed by choirs from the Eastern Cape and North West have achieved top spots in the competition in recent year. This could be demoralising for many other choirs that have made great efforts, but regularly end up with no awards. The awarding of such generous prizes could create serious divisions and animosity within the competition.

5.2.8 Collaboration as a result of preparation for competitions

The ABC Motsepe competition is the product of extensive consultations, which culminate in a confluence of partnerships. This organisation was established after a series of consultative workshops had been held in which national and provincial Departments of Education participated. Other organisations in attendance were teachers' labour unions, and bodies responsible for steering music programmes in different establishments. Some of the noteworthy collaborations and partnerships that ABC Motsepe seems to rely on include partnerships with the Departments of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST); the Provincial Education Departments and their provincial arts and culture counterparts; the organised teaching profession such as the South African Teachers Union, Professional Educators' Union and the National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa (NAPTOSA); recognised national organisations responsible

for organising school music competitions and/or festivals, as well as funding organisations (South Africa, 2000).

One of the very first partners from corporate business that partnered with ABC Motsepe was First National Bank. Even after they withdrew from the competition many years ago, the relationship continues to exist. At the end of the partnership agreement, FNB did not close the account, instead it was converted into what is today called the *Tirisano* Schools Choral Eisteddfod Trust (South Africa, 2014). Other sponsors who have partnered with ABC Motsepe are the AVBOB Foundation and Via Afrika Publishers. Collaborations are not only limited to funding. Some associations with ABC Motsepe include relationships with organisations such as the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the European Union (EU).

From all the reports mentioned above, it is clear that ABC Motsepe continues to look for more alliances, also outside of South Africa. For example, ABC Motsepe currently has partnerships with departments of education in Eswatini, Lesotho and Botswana. According to the protocol, it is envisaged that these transnational partnerships will eventually culminate in one sub-regional competition in member states of the Southern African Development Corporation (SADC). The spirit of ABC Motsepe seems to be one that believes that collaborations go beyond companies; that can include local relationships that are formed during competitions, especially with entrepreneurs and suppliers. Some collaborations that are relevant at choir level include the sharing of notes between conductors after getting to know each other during competitions. ABC Motsepe can thus be regarded as an example of a communal system that is strengthened by diverse partnerships.

5.3 Analysis of ATKV-Applous documents

In the following sections the ATKV-Applous documents regarding the background of the organisation, administration and participation, political and cultural influences, prescribed and selected repertoire, instrumental accompaniment as well as partnerships and financial support within ATKV-Applous, are discussed. ATKV-Applous as a competition is explored, followed by a discussion on collaboration

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as a result of preparation for competitions.

5.3.1 Background to the organisation

The ATKV (*Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging*) (translated as the Afrikaans Language and Culture Society) was founded in Cape Town by twelve members in 1930. The society was established on the principle of the preservation of the Afrikaans language and its related culture. Today it is regarded as the cultural home of many Afrikaans speakers with approximately 70 000 members and a host of 30 cultural projects a year, that generate almost 55 000 entries and involve more than 220 000 people directly (ATKV, 2019). ATKV-Applous was one of the projects presented by the ATKB (*Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurbond*) (translated as the Afrikaans Language and Culture Association). On its 43rd anniversary, the ATKB developed into the ATKV in 1993. The ATKV-Applous school choir competition is one of the many projects hosted by the ATKV (ATKV, 2019). These projects are presented in various fields, for example music events, drama performances and public speaking. The ATKV-Applous is aimed at promoting choral singing, especially among the youth of South Africa. It was created to drive the vision of the mother body (ATKV), which is to promote the Afrikaans language and culture within the Southern African community (ATKV, 2019(b)). The ATKV's premise, from inception, has been that only a proud community with confidence and respect for the organisation, its language, culture and its compatriots can contribute, with conviction, to the benefit of his/her homeland (Möller, 2006). Owing to this aspiration for cultural determination, the ATKV created subsidiaries that would be used to drive cultural activities across its communities. ATKV-Applous targets all school-going learners in private, independent and public schools.

It may be argued that because ATKV-Applous is an activity born out of the quest to protect, promote and preserve the Afrikaans language and culture, it leads to the exclusion of other cultures. However, the ATKV embarked on the process of transformation long before the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 (Möller, 2006). It had revised its stance as a monocultural organisation to become an Afrikaans organisation that promotes multicultural coexistence. A main change made in 1984, was that all ATKV projects opened their doors to all races. In 1990, an ATKV branch was established in Soweto (South Africa). Most recently, as in the past 20 years, the

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ATKV-Applous has embarked on a drive to market and encourage non-Afrikaans speaking choirs. This naturally includes hundreds of choir members for whom Afrikaans is their third or fourth language or who cannot speak or understand Afrikaans at all (according to personal communication with Applous organiser Bessie Keun, 2020-08-10). This was received with high levels of enthusiasm by Black choir conductors. These conductors advised the organising committee to consider adding an item based on an African language. This was done – a new move that was well received by Black conductors and choirs. This arrangement is in practice to this day. According to ATKV-Applous, such a development was considered a significant breakthrough to establish goodwill and a positive attitude towards Afrikaans as language.

During the final national ATKV-Applous competition in 2019, the ATKV CEO (Gerrie Lemmer) specifically highlighted the ATKV's dream to participate in fostering social cohesion in South Africa and declared that "we proudly celebrate Afrikaans and South Africa through choral singing" (ATKV, 2019(a)).

5.3.2 Administration and participation

The ATKV is a cultural organisation with a modern head office in Randburg, a suburb of Johannesburg (Möller, 2006). It has a board of directors, appointed during the annual congress from the ranks of the ATKV members. Within the ATKV there are structures such as the cultural committee, women's committee, finance committee, audit committee and a business committee. ATKV membership offers members the opportunity to engage in a variety of ways and become involved in Afrikaans cultural affairs. The ATKV policy and its views are reviewed annually at the congress.

As a result, the ATKV-Applous choir competition is hierarchical and based on a bureaucratic system with the CEO as the highest accounting officer. The ATKV-Applous competition is governed through a set of rules. These rules are enforced through local structures that have been decided on at the congress and provided for in the organisation's constitution. The branches are essential to the ATKV, since they establish its presence in communities, near and far. The rules are outlined

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as a guide to ensure that all participating choirs follow the same order in their dealing with ATKV-Applous.

ATKV-Applous is a competition divided into two phases, namely regional festivals followed by a final national competition. The rules, relevant to all sections, are outlined with clear instructions. The competition is divided into two main categories, namely primary schools and secondary schools. According to the 2019 rules, sub-categories in the primary section are prestige advanced choirs, merit and merit non-Afrikaans; junior choirs and junior choirs that are non-Afrikaans speaking; and an open section. In the secondary school section, the categories are prestige advanced choirs; merit (mixed, boys' choirs, and girl's choirs); the open section, and a non-competitive section. The last two categories are different from the ones above because they were mainly intended to encourage non-Afrikaans-speaking learners from other groups to join the ATKV-Applous choir competition.

5.3.3 Political and cultural influence

As mentioned earlier, ATKV-Applous was created to drive the vision of the ATKV, which is to promote the Afrikaans language and culture within the Southern African community. However, Möller (2006) confirms that by 1990, the ATKV foundation was no longer limited to the participation of only one cultural group. Participation, therefore, is no longer based on a narrow cultural perspective, but the broader South African community is accommodated. To this extent it can be concluded that ATKV-Applous is a choir competition that supplies a space for different cultural groups to celebrate their identity and heritage together under one banner. The ATKV advocates that cultural groups should get organised so that they can have an authoritative, legitimate voice as representatives of their own cultures (Möller, 2006).

5.3.4 Prescribed and selected repertoire

Due to its efforts to bring change and open doors for other cultural groups within South Africa, ATKV-Applous moved away from its early participation rules which were not inclusive to new repertoire selection and directives. These required each choir to render four choir works within fifteen minutes. In each programme, the choir should

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perform one prescribed work and a new composition in Afrikaans; one own choice Afrikaans choir work composed by a South African composer; one own choice song in one of the South African languages, other than Afrikaans and English, but could be in any language, be it African or European.

5.3.5 Instrumental accompaniment

Although there is no specific rule prescribing that the choir must be accompanied, most of the choir renditions are accompanied either by piano, or other orchestral instruments such as flute, clarinet, recorder and others. It is compulsory for African songs to be accompanied by drums as this instrument contributes greatly to the meaning and cultural context of the song. The prescribed music is sometimes composed with accompaniment. The same applies to many songs included as own choice, especially for younger singers who perform less music *a cappella*[15]. It should be noted that a good number of schools experience a challenge with accompaniment as not all school participating in the ATKV-Applous competition are privileged to have their own musical instruments, or an artist that can accompany the choir on the appropriate instruments, or one who can guide staff or choir members to perform this task.

5.3.6 Partnerships and financial support

ATKV branches initiate various projects to raise funds to sustain their operations. Some examples of these initiatives include quizzes, boating parties, family evenings with bring and *braai* [barbeque] functions, folk festivals, cultural evenings such as Christmas gatherings, multicultural singing, and other fundraising projects (Möller, 2006). ATKV-Applous depends on the mother body, ATKV, for financial support – especially for the transport and accommodation of choir members and conductors.

5.3.7 ATKV-Applous as a competition

ATKV-Applous is, for the most part, a competition, therefore, choirs perform to be evaluated. A panel of adjudicators is appointed to judge the choirs' performances.

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[15] The term "*a cappella*" refers to vocal music performed without melodic instrumental accompaniment.

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Each choir receives an evaluation report from each judge. Choirs participating in the regional festival receive a certificate of achievement for the following levels: ATKV-Gold (80–100%), ATKV-Silver (70–79%), ATKV-Bronze (60–69%). In the regional competition overall results are not announced. It must be noted that these regional competitions are finals in their own right. Therefore, choirs prepare thoroughly to ensure superior performances.

It can be argued that competitions in general do not support social cohesion. However, when attention is focused on the vision of the organisation which is about celebrating cultural experiences through music, the negative elements of competitions become secondary. According to Möller (2006), operations of the ATKV are driven with dedication to realise, promote and practise culture. Competitions in this regard become platforms for performance and, in the process, sharing and learning from each other. The ATKV-Applous organisers host many workshop opportunities for conductors before these competitions take place. These reinforce the learning indicator that is related to social cohesion.

5.3.8 Collaboration as a result of preparation for competitions

ATKV-Applous is the brainchild of an organisation that believes in collaboration. Over time the ATKV has created partnerships with many bodies within and across the borders of South Africa, such as Namibia. New relations were created as a result of new ties after opening doors to all cultures. This includes collaborating with many musicians who have knowledge of indigenous music. These individuals serve as advisors on African indigenous music.

ATKV-Applous is currently using the services of adjudicators sourced from African backgrounds for their expert opinion and guidance in how African music "works". Since introducing the African indigenous item to their programme, ATKV-Applous choirs have created relations with African conductors to share their knowledge of and expertise in African music. Such relations have a positive contribution to social cohesion.

5.4 Findings from document analysis

This section firstly focuses on similarities between the two competitions, as deduced from the document analysis, followed by a discussion of the differences.

5.4.1 Similarities in the two competitions

Both choir competitions use music to involve young and old. Social cohesion is intended from exchanging of knowledge and materials through interactions of role players as part of the choral events. Both choir competitions provide different platforms to accommodate diverse role players such as farm schools, special schools, and mainstream schools. This provides for a variety of experiences that serve the purpose of contributing to wider social inclusion. Both competitions are based on bureaucratic and hierarchical administrative structures, regulated by policies and rules from the mother bodies. The two competitions have adopted a business-like approach and are managed as projects with a certain time frame. The nature of both competitions reflects characteristics of a competition (where learners compete for a prize) as well as a festival (where learners sing for enjoyment and the entertainment of the audience).

5.4.2 Findings in the documents that separate the two competitions

The ABC Motsepe competition is for public schools only and is aligned to government policy of national reconciliation. ATKV-Applous is a choir competition for all schools but was originally meant for Afrikaans schools.

The ABC Motsepe relies on wholesale prescribed music (the bulk of the music is based on a prescribed repertoire). On the other hand, the music performed in ATKV-Applous competitions reflects a mix of prescribed works and own song selections. ATKV-Applous offers choirs a broad choice from several categories that have been created in these competitions, starting with its transformation agenda. ATKV-Applous has three main categories, namely, the non-competitive, competitive and open categories.

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The non-competitive category caters for all choirs who want to sing, but not for competition purposes. This is still an opportunity for learners to interact and benchmark with other choirs. The competitive category is where choirs enter to compete and are awarded for outperforming others. This category is also open to all school choirs, including young people who are no longer in school. The open category is a new category that was introduced in 2019 to cater for school choirs who choose to perform any music style including pop/jazz/a choreographed show choir style, with no restriction regarding prescribed music.

ABC Motsepe offers a more limited range of choices. Although there are a variety of categories, they are all competitive, with no scope for non-competitive participation. The categories are farm schools, open choice, and regular category. The farm school category has been created specifically for farm schools with children of farm workers. These schools are different because they a have small number of learners and age groups that are not as consistent with the groupings in mainstream schools. The open choice category was created to cater for schools with learners who have special needs. They can sing any music of their choice as there is no prescribed music in this category. The regular category is for all schools who provide for learners without special needs.

ABC Motsepe's rules are more regulatory and instructive with the emphasis on competition. The guidelines of ATKV-Applous are less regulatory. The ABC Motsepe adjudication system compares choirs and, therefore, awards positions based on marks. Choirs are rewarded with cash prizes and tokens such as musical instruments. In ATKV-Applous choirs are also compared and awarded positions based on marks; each choir, however, is judged on its own merit and receives comments on how to improve. Awards do not have monetary value, but are rather certificates of merit, which include bronze, silver or gold.

5.5 Data analysis of semi-structured interviews

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with the conductors and adjudicators who participated in ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe, were conducted. These were guided by the scheduled open-ended interview questions. Following the completion of the

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interviews, the following six steps, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006:2), were applied to data analysis: 1) becoming familiar with the data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) refining themes and 6) writing up. After having analysed the data, four main themes with sub-themes emerged:

(1) Personal history

- Experiences of early music platforms;
- Accepting the conducting role (with or without prior acquired skills);
- Learning from peers and professionals.

(2) Repertoire

- Prescribed and selected repertoire.

(3) Cultural diversity

- Experiencing cultural diversity in choir competitions.

(4) Choral singing/competitions and social cohesion

- Benefits of choral music towards social cohesion;
- Perspectives on change and social cohesion in choir competitions;
- The role of management systems (school management).

These themes were used to analyse the data to check whether school choir competitions have made any contribution to social cohesion in a transforming South Africa.

5.5.1 Theme 1: Personal history

- **Subtheme: Experiences of early music platforms**

Participation in choirs usually starts early in the lives of individuals. Data shows that choir music is practised in a variety of institutions, such as churches and schools. Through participation in singing, choristers become conscious of their potential and

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develop greater desires to try harder, thus gaining recognition and a certain elevation within the community. One respondent attested that

> … when I was growing up, I was singing in the Sunday school at church. When I got to school as a Grade 1 learner, I would sing, and teachers would be like "wow hu!" Even in the assembly my voice would stand out, and that is when I realised that I can sing, seeing from the attention I received. Then I sang in the choirs, when I was still in Foundation Phase I was singing in the Intermediate Phase choir (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 17).

In this regard, singing strengthens relationships and nourishes the sense of happiness for participants. The quote below shows that singing contributes to cordial relations that develop between individuals who sing together.

> I was introduced to music at a very early age. I used to sing in Sunday church and after that in school as well. I was involved in school choirs at a primary school and so I grew up with music and everything that was around me it was all about music. Even at home we sing as a family while my mother is cooking, my two sisters are doing their business we sing (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 20).

Singing can, therefore, be regarded as a stimulus that has a psychological effect on individuals, which in turn, creates the need for children to become conscious and develop self-realisation. While churches serve religious purposes, they also offer opportunities for people to enjoy singing together and to learn how to connect with each other.

The above extract also shows that music can create a meeting platform between families, which may also serve as a springboard for extended relationships in society. Some levels of coherence can be deduced from the fact that young people are able to develop the ability to work together at an early stage, by way of singing together. The proceeds of the social capital accrued from singing as a family, can be shared with other members of the community in choirs.

Singing in early life helps to build certain values that can be relied upon in society. Some of these values are self-reliance and trust in others. These values seem to be useful – especially when a person grows up and is introduced to a more complex social space. One respondent reflected as follows:

> In my early days in primary school, they used to say: "Play us something", and I would go to the piano and try to play. I did not do this thing of "no, I can't play". I just went for it (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 12).

This indicates that early participation in choir activities can play a positive role as young people learn how to take responsibility and respect others in their roles. This develops the ability to function in diverse environments. These early opportunities of exposure to music can contribute to participants' character shaping as they learn how to empathise and how to be trustworthy.

It can be noted from the above comments that social integration is made possible when music is used as the glue which can facilitate cooperation, sharing and reciprocation between participants.

The data analysis confirms that participation in nursery and primary school choirs can provide a formal opportunity where learners can acquire valuable skills for social cohesion, such as reciprocity and trust. Early music platforms in this regard offer learners the opportunity to learn to work together and explore their own abilities while they are part of the group. This is a positive contribution to learning group dynamics which can help in the development of aspects of social cohesion such as networks of mutual support, participation and inclusion as well as interracial contacts.

It can be further deduced that participation in these institutions offers a very important opportunity for learners as they learn how to commit and honour relations with others and within the group.

Respondents associated participation in choirs with the creation of strong bonds and social ties that could contribute to long-term commitments as in relationships of

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friendship which could result in lifetime partnerships. An example of a relationship that started from the choir is described as follows:

> … my father loved music. He and my mother met each other in a church choir. So, from young my father played us records at that time of old music solos and choir music and we just loved and when I was about 10 years old, I started taking piano lessons (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 29).

It can be concluded from the reference above that music offers a valuable pathway through which adults can inspire the younger generation by sharing music experiences. This can widen narrow channels of communication and improve relations between adults and their learners, thus, benefiting improvement of ties and bonds within the family. These bonds are kept tied by the social capital that will have accrued between the beneficiaries.

From the interviews, it was evident that early participation in choir activities offered learners the opportunity to be recognised by their conductors as being talented. One of the candidates made the following remarks:

> … some of my friends were already at third year level (their third academic year as students) and they looked at me and said "we need a choir for the day students; you were in the front at the youth choir, come on, you start a choir (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 3).

Although participation in early platforms of choir singing can promote good social relations, other respondents reflected on certain contradictions that could suffocate the possibility of their ideals being realised. Some of the respondents pointed to some of the negative experiences they encountered in their early involvement in choirs. Some antisocial patterns such as bullying, and envy were mentioned.

> Through my primary school the learners did not always like me because I was always in the spotlight because I could sing and then I was chosen for the Pretoria children's choir (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 3).

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> The moment a young boy is interested in singing in a choir then you get quite a few bullies telling him he is a *sissie* [girlish]. It was a big problem when I started to teach, because there were boys who were keen to sing but they were too scared of that word (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 10).

From this data, it can be concluded that music platforms, specifically participation in choirs, are useful for the preparation of young learners to be able to accept and deal with opposition. This also provides an opportunity for learners to solve conflict and misunderstanding that can occur during interaction. These skills can be very handy in their lives and in their leadership roles as conductors later in their careers. To that extent, it can be concluded that early choir participation can contribute to development of strong ties that are formed during events that are experienced through sharing and collaboration.

The data analysis revealed that memories of early choir participation can contribute to further involvement in networks of choir conductors. The ability to balance criticism and disappointment can be learned by observing some competitive behaviour encountered in early platforms.

The data also shows that choir competitions can improve communication, collaboration, participation and conflict resolution. From the interviews it may be noted that early music networks can contribute to the development of new behavioural patterns that can help young people to respond to the complex social climate of choir competitions.

Singing together can transfer norms and values that lead to closer relations between people who once were strangers. This means that participation in early platforms can influence singers to become more empathetic and compassionate in relationships. In support of the observation raised by the respondents, the two competitions are generally characterised by cordial relations, where different role players do their part and complement each other on the success of each event. Even though these are competitions, the levels of tensions never get in the way. It can be concluded that music has the ability to connect choirs internally and competitions create numerous and bigger platforms on which choirs interact. These interactions provide opportunities for

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strangers to meet, share music and learn from each other, thus strengthening social cohesion.

- **Subtheme: Accepting the role as choir conductor (with or without prior acquired skills)**

From the data analysis, it is clear that a substantial number of participants accepted the role as conductor without prior acquired skills, but subsequently gained much from the experience. Some respondents from both choir competitions had become conductors and/or accompanists before they could acquire any formal training. This also applied to being appointed as adjudicators in choir competitions. As to where they got the skills, respondents referred to their former choir conductors as having been the role models from whom they learnt by observing and remembering their skills. Various reasons were given for taking over the leadership of choirs without possessing the relevant skills.

> … my teacher left and then I got a job as an organist in church and suddenly I had a church choir, I was so inexperienced. The choir that I had to train was my first choir (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 7).

> Ma'am came up to me and said, "here is the score, we are doing the operetta and you are going to play" … I was thrown in the deep and I did it. And then I had a girls' choir, everybody wanted to join (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 12).

> I left Kagiso township to sing at the State Theatre from 1997 until 2000, when the State Theatre closed because of lack of funds. I then joined the Gauteng Choristers and became a conductor of the same choir until today (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 21).

Although the respondents had accepted these positions, they were aware of the challenges and potential resistance that they were likely to face. Nevertheless, instead of fleeing, they decided to persevere. They believed that they could persevere and succeed due to the social capital that they and the choir had accrued over time.

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Furthermore, it would seem that the participants believed that knowledge gained over time, as members of the choir, would enable them to make strides. This belief and reliance on others demonstrate that commitments and relationships between individuals and between groups is the essence of choirs.

Others assumed leadership as first pioneers, however due to perseverance and persistence, they trusted that they had developed in their early participation in choirs. This helped them to establish their leadership, as Participants 3 and 7 recall:

> I started the choir, [with] no knowledge whatsoever (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 3).

> I was so inexperienced, really didn't know anything because I did not sing in a choir before that. My choir that I had to train was my first choir and I remember I had to start every sentence with the words, "I think…". (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 7).

From these inputs one can conclude that choirs may provide a space where trust can be cultivated, even in situations where prospects are doubtful. The respondents relied on the hope that people have good intentions and will always support a good cause. Some of these conductors have been celebrated for their successes, while choirs also provide a platform where leadership can be fostered. This is also a training platform that creates an opportunity for growth and development. One of the participating conductors realised that she was able to use the knowledge and experience she had to achieve more.

> I have no formal conducting training and I adopted some really bad or strange habits. I invented some ways to get what I want and it was only when I was fifty that I did some conducting classes, but that was too late … (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 7).

The above accounts show how the networks of mutual support created by being a member of music platforms can encourage participation and integration from which learning can be positively achieved and exploited. All of these can lead to the

development of self-assurance, facilitated by social capital among choir members and choir leaders. In such an environment, choir members are assured of their talents through feedback, which helps them gain the trust that enables them to believe in themselves. In such spaces, members realise their leadership and musical potential, which gives them self-confidence even before they receive any formal training. Such informal learning can be traced back to the sharing of norms and values between choir members. It reinforces the notion that participation and inclusion can play a pivotal role in leading and developing the ability in learners to conduct choirs.

The data also show that choir participation for learners is a platform that can prepare them to contribute meaningfully in their immediate communities, or elsewhere in society, to the benefit of others. Such contributions can enhance social cohesion by increasing the length of the participants' membership in the choir and maximising levels of commitments and relationships between individuals and between groups.

- **Subtheme: Learning from peers and professionals**

Participation in choir competitions provides conductors with opportunities to learn from one another. This is the result of attendance of workshops and seminars where professionals share experience and skills. Many of the respondents said that meeting with other professionals provided the opportunity to build connections for collaboration. Learning in various platforms was facilitated by various methods such as being mentored, attending workshops, and watching choir performances on television. One of the respondents associated the aspect of mentoring with social cohesion. This was attributed to the long relationship that was fostered through a partnership between the conductor and the accompanist.

> I had a very good mentor for quite a few years … and she saw this potential in me; she developed it very quietly in me and then in her way, she would talk about conducting stuff with me and always asked for my opinion and in a silent manner she fostered this love for choirs in me (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 2).

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One of the participants indicated that her professor inspired her to become a pianist and conductor.

> There was a very good professor there … the things he taught me. He used to play for us in class and I just sat there… thinking, if I can be like that. He made me love music so much (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 12).

This inspiration can be viewed as a bond that accrued between the conductor and the choir members over time.

The data reveals that respondents regarded the interaction with adjudicators after competitions as a valuable means of improving conducting skills and growth. One respondent described such an incident:

> I can remember the music inspector then, as we walked down the stage, she said […], please ask your choir to stay here till the end and I want to see you as well. So, we stayed. She said: "Get your choir up there". She said, "Conduct". I conducted. She said, "Stop, conduct!" I conducted. She said, "Please lift your arms". She said: "Do it again" and I did it again. Then my choir sounded different and she said, "You've got talent" (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 3).

Appraisals given through peer reviews or the adjudicators' feedback, were described as a learning opportunity:

> What I have learnt just from adjudicators with their comments: I did not study a university degree in music, but I have learnt a lot of things from these adjudicators. What they gave me has made me a better choir master, every year my choir became better and better (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 3).

One of the ABC Motsepe participants cited exposure to television music programmes as another way to learn:

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One day I was watching TV and suddenly I saw this big Italian man singing and I did not know who he was then. It was Luciano Pavarotti; he was the famous tenor and I was glued to the TV. I could not understand what he was singing about but funny enough I was following. And I took a piece of paper and started writing what I thought he was saying. Remember, I did not even understand Italian. I wrote the words down. He was so articulate in his singing and I remember after that I said to myself this is what I want to do (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 20).

The evidence in the data analysis, referred to above, indicates that good social relations can be achieved through professional development. By observing and benchmarking with their peers in the field, conductors may be able to advance their knowledge about choir management and leadership. The above opportunities contribute to social bridges because conductors create networks of mutual support among each other. Once the skills have been acquired, they are cascaded down to learners through rehearsals and coaching sessions.

Learning as a result of watching and copying songs and dances can be beneficial to partnerships because these facilitate sharing and reciprocal skills. This can change the negative view about competitions as people will start seeing them in a positive light and as an opportunity to build relationships. ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe offer these opportunities and, as such, contribute to inclusion. Sharing promotes commitments and relationships between individuals and groups. The conclusion that both the learners and the conductors benefit from choir competitions, while advancing their skills through formal and informal platforms, can be reached.

Adjudicators are able to learn from each other during discussions that are mostly purpose-driven and objective; this should enhance the quality of the competition. The levels of trustworthiness should be increased as adjudications will be reliable. The value of such opportunities is that levels of trust between professionals may be increased, thus leading to shared norms and values and increased commitments and relationships between individuals and between groups.

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5.5.2 Theme 2: Repertoire

- **Subtheme: Prescribed and selected repertoire**

ATKV-Applous respondents who were interested in participating in ABC Motsepe blamed the policy of prescribed music as the main reason for their non-participation and loss of interest. Their main concern was the high standards that ABC Motsepe has set for prescription and the lack of alternatives for choirs. Some participants reported as follows:

> SASCE's (the former name of ABC Motsepe) prescribed music is totally wrong. Primary school children sing soprano and alto. You don't have tenor and bass, but they prescribe SATB music. If they want to prescribe, they must do a lot of homework (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 3).

> I think most often SASCE (the former name of ABC Motsepe) pieces are much, much more difficult than the Applous prescribed work. Not all choirs can sing it (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 29).

> The choice of music they (ABC Motsepe) chose was very strange to me. It included difficult opera choruses which township choirs all over the country had to learn and yet many of them don't have pianos. So, it was extremely Western music. I could not understand it. I thought it was very, very hard for people who cannot read the music, although we can all work by ear. That's not the primary problem, I had many kids who cannot read music (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 8).

The strict, bureaucratic song prescription system practised by the ABC Motsepe seems to cause low participation rates, especially of choirs from White schools. The rigid system of prescription and disregard for diversity and musical background can be blamed for the apathy towards the ABC Motsepe competition shown by various choirs. The fact that ATKV-Applous choirs could not be accommodated in ABC Motsepe due to prescriptions is a missed opportunity for the creation of social bridges that could have resulted from connections during the competition. This could weaken mutual

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support networks needed for links that may have resulted between the two competitions. Such links could be necessary for realising the interracial contact needed in a previously divided society in South Africa. Some of the ABC Motsepe respondents also argued that the learners' developmental stages were not considered when music was prescribed.

> I think there is a drastic lack of consideration of the levels of singers. Chorus items are selected from serious oratorio pieces. Some choirs do them justice. But the problem is what the result is. Are they just preparing? Some people experience apathy because of the level of prescription (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 18).

From the above it can be noted that the lack of consideration for the participants when important decisions are made, such as deciding on music and genres, can affect participation negatively, leading to a lack of interest in participation. This can also deprive learners of the opportunity of participating in activities that could facilitate good social ties among learners and conductors. This could equally deprive parents whose interest is to see their children being exposed to other cultures. This can also lead to a reduction in obligations and relationships between individuals and groups, thus diminishing opportunities for creating new professional ties between choir conductors and adjudicators. Some participants echoed these sentiments:

> I think the choice of works was wrong for choirs especially for beginner choirs (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 8).

Some participants lamented the choice of prescribed music:

> If they sit and choose the piece, the people that are choosing the piece are not in the school system, they are not in touch with the things in school. So, if they choose a piece that is not likable, learners like to sing things they can identify with (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 4).

The understanding and comprehension of the vocal abilities of children were also questioned.

> A lot of the music is SATB (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) and my choir does not have these voices. With the African category you need the bass. So, a lot of the time there is no African music available for my choir, it is only for SATB (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 17).

It, therefore, implies that the prescribed music may also reduce diversity in participation, as it may be difficult for some choirs to find appropriate voices for all the parts of the song. Thus, those who prescribe the music should also consider the contexts and specific abilities and needs of the schools.

Respecting the needs and interests of learners by selecting music that relates to their world and social conditions can be of value to inclusion in that choir members will enjoy singing and continue to participate. This will assist in fostering commitment to and better relations between choirs. Such considerations can contribute to the creation of a sense of belonging among choirs.

Apart from Western classical compositions, some respondents also referred to works that were composed by South Africans as too difficult. An example mentioned by one of the ABC Motsepe respondents:

> African composers, the likes of Professor Mzilikazi Khumalo[16]; his music is too difficult. The rhythmic patterns are extremely difficult and very complex (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 20).

This suggests that the nature of prescribed music may cause some choirs to feel disregarded, especially if the music does not match their interests. Although many voices expressed concern regarding the prescription of songs, one of the ABC

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[16] Professor Mzilikazi Khumalo is a Professor Emeritus of African Languages. He is also a composer, arranger and choral director. He was recognised for his contribution to the unification of the two South African National Anthems (*Die Stem van Suid Afrika* and *Nkosi Sikelele Afrika.)* https://chevalierdesaintgeorges.homestead.com/Khumalo.html

Motsepe adjudicators argued that the music was not too difficult, but that it was challenging.

> SASCE (later known as ABC Motsepe) is doing very well in terms of prescription but there are one or two instances perhaps, where they go beyond the scope of the choirs (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 23).

This opinion, however, is vague because the same respondent also observed that the prescribed repertoire reflected unrealistic expectations of choirs. In this regard, one of the respondents suggested that prescribed music disempowers some groups; especially if all choirs were expected to sing songs in a language like isiZulu.

> In a country like South Africa, it also can cause a massive disadvantage when selecting a certain piece that all cultures have to sing because certain groups may ultimately be advantaged, while others are disadvantaged (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 6).

With regard to the role of choice of repertoire, one adjudicator indicated as follows:

> If you chose the wrong music, you have sunk the whole programme. I cannot do too difficult music; it is not a competitive choir. This is a choir to teach them how to be disciplined, to teach them how to follow music even if they can't read music and to give them as much enjoyment as possible (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 11).

The above views of respondents are evidence of the fact that many comments related to choir music are based on prescription. Disregard for age can thwart opportunities for inclusion. From the above it can be noted that prescribed music that is too difficult and age-irrelevant can undermine choirs, risking their viability in their communities, as the choirs feel disempowered and helpless because no alternatives to the prescribed works are allowed. This can reduce the level of participation and inclusion because choirs may feel less valued and left out. Commitments and relationships between individuals and groups could be reduced because some choirs may find it undesirable

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to participate because they regard music competitions as a struggle rather than enjoyment for all.

5.5.3 Theme 3: Cultural diversity

- **Sub-theme: Experiencing cultural diversity in choir competitions**

Respondents from the ATKV-Applous referred to African indigenous music as challenging and very exciting:

> […] the learners love African music. It has vibe and energy that Afrikaans and English do not always have. You get a huge response from the audience (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 15).

Respondents participating in ATKV-Applous unanimously agreed that South African audiences, regardless of diverse cultural backgrounds, embrace the idea of African music. Two of the participants reflected as follows:

> When they get on the stage, the audience goes wild, they could not believe what they had heard and it was like opening windows and doors to everybody that evening and we just found that the Afrikaans and English choirs especially the Afrikaans choir, love traditional music (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 11).

> White audiences are careful when cheering, whereas black Africans will yell: "Yes, it's my kid!" which I love, but we each had to get used to these characteristics of each other. And now I see White parents going: "Yeah!!! That one is mine!" and opening up (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 8).

An ABC Motsepe respondent advocates using music from other cultures as a positive thing for developing an understanding about others:

> The folklore of other cultures is important because it helps you to relate more and to relate easily with other cultures knowing their music background.

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Remember, you can even say more in singing than in words so it is quite important for you, especially the conductor and as an adjudicator, if you want to study music further as I did, to open yourself to other cultures so that you become well-informed so that people can trust you (ABC Motsepe: Respondent 20).

From this data one can conclude that good relations develop even through the observation of movements and rhythms of music. Therefore, good social relations are not only facilitated between people who speak the same language and know each other's cultures, but also through being in the same space and being a spectator. To that extent it can be concluded that through learning each other's cultures, prejudices about each other's cultural practices can be reduced and levels of acceptance between each other, in spite of distinctive differences, can be enhanced.

I think we are now at the point where if you would sit in a hall … and close your eyes … just first listening to them, you would not be able to say okay that's a black choir, that's a white choir, because everyone has embraced everything. If that's not social cohesion, then I don't know what it is (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 8).

Most of the respondents from ATKV-Applous acknowledged how being exposed to African music has helped them to change their negative points of view about African cultures. They believed that the inclusion of African music in programmes has opened a space for inclusion in their choirs. The respondents understood that disregarding each other's music would only reverse the gains of social cohesion.

Living in a multicultural society, it is important for us to develop our learners to understand that they must know and understand other cultures so that they are able to respect other people also (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 16).

This data reveals that social bridges can be realised if people remove stereotypes and embrace each other's heritage. Some participants suggested however, that social co-existence can be accomplished through social activism and resisting rationalisation.

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We need to educate our White people what African music is about, even if they don't understand it. I can't imagine sitting listening to African music without dancing. My heart is open and I think that is what has changed in me (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 7).

If people are willing to be educated and learn from each other, they can narrow their cultural differences. In addition, solidarity can be realised by demonstrating the will to learn each other's languages.

I have learned quite a few things in the other indigenous languages, from singing in those languages, I have learned a lot about the customs of those people […] (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 26).

This made me curious about other cultures as in Zulu, Xhosa, and Setswana and so forth. (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 20).

Not all participants viewed the introducing of African indigenous music into the ATKV-Applous school choir competition in a positive light. Some highlighted the challenges they faced by having to include African songs as part of their repertoire for the competition.

Getting the music is too difficult and then to perform the music, that's very difficult for me. There are pronunciations, that are very difficult for me. I don't want to go and sing somewhere and then someone hears, what are you talking about, what are you singing about? And I think that happens often, so I am very scared to do that music (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 2).

For me it is difficult because I don't have the natural feeling for this rhythm. I am…very ehhh. I cannot improvise on the piano. I need sheet music; I work very well from sheet music from solfa. Personally, its difficult (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 11).

Some ATKV-Applous respondents claimed that African music could not be accurately adjudicated because of a lack of existing standards.

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The big thing I've got with the ATKV that's not nice for me, is the fact that the adjudicators for the prelims are different from adjudicators of the finals. For example, now you get in the prelims and no one is an expert in African music. Now you get a report and normally what I do with a report, I take it and I read it and underline. I go to the music. I really do a big study from what they say there. And then I try to use my brain; I think and then also my experience to know what is important and what is not. And, especially the African music, I do a lot of research because we do not speak an African language (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 4).

Other conductors who participated in ATKV-Applous referred to the opposition they faced in their own communities as they tried to introduce indigenous African music in their choirs:

One day one of the choir members said, "If you come to do that (making us sing African music) once more, I am leaving the choir". I said, "I am doing it as long as I feel I must do it" and he left. It was a painful thing for that to happen. I don't think everybody was thrilled with [African] music at that time […] (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 12).

It can be concluded from the above that folk music from other cultures provides challenges as well as benefits. Challenges such as difficulties in pronunciation and other performance practices result in opportunities for social connections between culturally diverse people to share their music. African music seems to have wide support in the ATKV-Applous landscape. The conductors who participated in ATKV-Applous saw this as a pathway that helped them eradicate many traces of prejudice about other different cultures and their arts. The benefit of including indigenous African music in the competitions was to realise how valuable it was to be multicultural and understanding towards one another. It can also be concluded that through sharing and participating in each other's musical cultures, there is reciprocal trust that can create peaceful co-existence. Also resulting from the opening of the competition to all South African racial groups, increased interracial contact. African choirs are now singing Afrikaans music and learners from Afrikaans schools are, in turn, singing indigenous African music.

5.5.4 Theme 4: Choral singing/competitions and social cohesion

- **Sub-theme: The role of school management in choirs**

Although the researcher had not planned on asking questions about the role of management in choirs, the topic seemed to be of importance since it emerged in many of the interview conversations. Many of the respondents indicated that they believed in the value of choir activities in schools as offering platforms for promoting inclusion within the school as well as in the wider community. However, they regarded a lack of support from school management as a stumbling block. Participants experienced that school management tended to support sport more than cultural activities.

The ATKV-Applous respondents referred to rugby as being the preferred sport by school management. The ABC Motsepe respondents felt that soccer got more support than the choirs in their schools. The following views reflect the above:

> … sport comes first. You always have to make sure your choir does not clash with other sports. Sometimes you have missing learners because they are at the sports activities (Participant ATKV-Applous: Respondent 1).

The fact that choirs are not given enough time in schools brings choir conductors and choirs under pressure when they must train for competitions. Respondents stated as follows:

> … time is a great problem in the school system. You know every teacher needs to do certain amount of work, whether it's your academic work, whether it's your extramural which in my case is now the choir, so there is a lot of pressure (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 2).

> The challenge firstly, is time. In school they don't take music that serious especially in our Black schools because they take it that we just sing everywhere. We sing at church; we sing in funerals. In our Black communities we don't have instruments like pianos and guitars and everything, so everybody, most of are musical, so if you want to do a choir,

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they don't take it that serious because it is like everybody can sing (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 17).

… now we are heading towards the competitions and I am left with only two weeks; the kids they don't know their songs very well; maybe if I ask for extensions, to have them from one o'clock until three, it would be a problem that "no no no the curriculum first". I think that is the biggest challenge (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 17).

… schools start in the middle of January, so you do interviews with children, then choir camps. You start practising in February. It means there are ten weeks in the term so let's say you practice and then you have four weeks in the second term so there are fourteen weeks in which to prepare four songs. That can be very difficult (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 1).

I was asked to train senior choir for two years, it was the most terrifying experience of my life, and it is very difficult to work with the primary senior choir, to get them to sing in voices. Time is always a problem. The choir is always singing when there is sport (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 11).

Data on the lack of management explain the reasons for a low level of integration in some schools. Participants agree that choirs have an inherent capacity to involve many learners directly, which may lead to an increase in multiculturalism. Due to a lack of support, some of the ATKV-Applous regional competitions had to be postponed or venues changed because there were not enough choirs for the event to take place. Some choirs do not get support to invite external help or expertise, especially for the African indigenous category. These choirs find themselves in a position where they must come up with a song despite not understanding its context. Some choirs do not have drummers and depend on learners who usually do not possess adequate skills to make a good impression.

- **Subtheme: Benefits of choral music towards social cohesion**

The benefits of choirs as platforms that may contribute to social cohesion were viewed in various dimensions. The benefits range from being sources of friendships, opportunities for culture sharing, community networks, bonding in families, skills development and the development of social institutions. The following views were shared:

> The learners make such good friends. I find that there are such good friendships in the choir between Black and White learners, so I think the feeling of well-being that singing together brings, even if it is at competition level is good. It is also very nice to know that what I have worked for has evolved into a good product (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 11).

Others thought of choirs as families and that the relationships that had developed through commitment in that environment were highly regarded and greatly valued. These bonds are appreciated and kept very close in the hearts of members.

> It's like a family; it's like an absolute family that happens there. You've got your camps, you have your birthdays, you have your sadness, you lost your father while in that choir (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 7).

Families are renowned for the close ties that bind them together. They share and reciprocate trust and have common values that give them their identity. Such characteristics are good for social cohesion as they contribute to bonds that bind members together. Choirs contribute to the skills of participants.

> … when you are working with your choir, you are not only teaching them music. I teach them etiquette, right and wrong, professionalism, and I want to be a role model all the time because some of them don't have other role models (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 17).

Learning is a crucial element of social cohesion. Choirs provide an opportunity to learn certain social skills, such as listening, interaction, teamwork and patience. These abilities build choirs in which all members have the same vision that gives them one

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direction. Songs provide material where vocabulary can be learnt, and messages that could benefit society are often conveyed through songs. Choirs have the ability to facilitate good relations between groups and provide the need for more purposeful participation and cooperation.

> I find that there are such good friendships in the choir between Black and White learners, absolutely, it is a group. And if you look at choir reunions, they are probably the reunions that are best attended over the years … (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 11).

The above findings provide evidence that choir competitions provide an opportunity to build connections within the school system, also between the choirs and in society. Such relations have the potential to result in a movement that could help spread the message of nation-building, social capital and integration.

Teachers and learners can become pioneers of this kind of advocacy, by engaging as groups that not only aim to score points and win awards, but also as advocates of social awareness on various social issues. These may include issues such as gender violence and drug abuse. The benefits may extend to communities, possibly resulting in schools benefiting from the support of their own communities. The above views also indicate that learners could have the opportunity to acquire good social etiquette as they interact with other choir members. This may mean that communities whose learners take part in choirs enjoy some fellowship as they sing and enjoy being part of something they can share with others. According to the data, choirs increase social cohesion by creating platforms where choristers can form part of networks of mutual support.

One respondent referred to choir singing and competitions as a tool of social cohesion in that these were, on the whole, readily available to most people, regardless of their skills or social standing. These activities could also attract more learners compared to those numbers participating in sports activities.

> Yes, I think it is a fantastic social platform and, with society that is ever changing to be more cohesive, I think the children in our schools would

benefit. As I told you, they are from all other cultures on the planet. It is a very good thing to get children to stand on the same stage and sing the same language (Participant in ABC Motsepe, Respondent 21).

Choir competitions are an internationally celebrated phenomenon that provide an open door for participation. Participation could lead to new alliances that can be used by host countries to build partnerships that could help, not only members of such choirs, but also create international partnerships. The respondents also suggested that the choirs had a "multiplier effect", because they included the number of participants as well as the audience.

> Sport is a very strong factor for social cohesion, but not everybody can do sport. Sportsmen are not many; I can also say it is for an elite bunch… but choral music is something that lots of people can do. Most kids can sing. Everyone can become part of this discipline. I can almost say any singer who has decided to participate in this discipline, is soon subordinate to the activities of this discipline. You'll see people come together because it is an intellectual activity (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 8).

Choirs should, therefore, be supported in order to facilitate growth in participation. This could help spread common social values and norms across society. According to another respondent, choirs are also secure spaces that can protect learners from abuse by keeping them busy after school.

> Music helps kids to get out of the streets and have purpose in life. Their lives are channelled in a good way (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 23).

Choir activities provide a safety net for learners whose parents are not always with them, thus contributing to safety and sanity in society and contributing to their well-being. Choirs not only serve as extra-curricular activities, but they also provide opportunities for learning and sharing of knowledge.

> … you learn a lot because I think as you get older, you also learn other stuff. But in the ATKV (Applous) you hear other choirs; you listen to what they do.

Not try to do the same, but listen. And I think the fact that they encourage us to take part and to develop a standard, for sure you get better every year. You do get better every year (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 4).

This ensures that choirs have a chance to test their performance by watching others. By practising these good practices, learners can gain more knowledge and new skills. This also extends to conductors and adjudicators. Choir competitions have also been characterised as fellowships.

We invite those [conductors] to a small coffee and tea afterwards. We ask them please to come and talk to the adjudicator, don't be afraid. It's like adjudicators are there on the pedestal and [the conductors] are then so quiet (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 29).

Fellowship as an aspect of social cohesion gives participants the opportunity to come together as colleagues and share notes. This also helps to create mutual forums where knowledge and skills can be shared and reciprocated. This can work well for adjudicators and conductors who need such platforms in order to be able to challenge themselves. Choir competitions are also good for building bridges between parents. This happens as they begin to reach out to each other through conversations, sharing transport and helping where the need arises.

I think this can lead to friendship and I see with others where I am at; the friendships are very strong and it is very good to see how the parents also becoming friends due to learners' friendships (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 15).

I think and I strongly believe choirs in South Africa, music in general, are the driving forces for bringing people together. So, if we allow choirs to dominate more in our societies then definitely society will come together (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 20).

This respondent further argued that music could help one to change one's perspective from a non-inclusive to an inclusive one:

> You know, we know music is a universal language. Music helped me to learn not to judge. It changed my perspective on how to look at other cultures. Before I knew that much, I used to think that my culture was more important. I learnt to take time to know other cultures before I may judge (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 20).

Choirs can provide a haven for the destitute and defend one against crime and drug abuse. According to one of the respondents from ABC Motsepe, choir singing was security against police brutalisation. The comment below illustrates the point:

> In the Johannesburg Music Festival there were small ensembles, other music genres such as Isicathamiya, Jazz and suchlike. Now it took the whole weekend because when people moved around town in the evening, they had to carry the *nagpass* (night pass) and without the *nagpas* then you were facing arrest. So, people would stay there from Friday and leave on Sunday, so they entertained themselves there. On Friday evenings they would do what is called *ngoma ya bosuku or Maskande* (the song of the night). On Saturday they would have small ensembles choir competitions and if there were a choir or two, they would give them the opportunity to sing. Sometimes the Festival ran into the evening. People would miss the train, then the Jazz Festival would take over to continue the event; then on Sunday they would continue the competition and end the event. That's when they got together and made music. The whole idea grew, to start thinking of formulating a formal choral competition where choirs would come and compete in that event. This had to do with social cohesion (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 27).

This suggests that choirs are good for social unity as they bring people from different backgrounds with many differences to unite with one focus, namely learning music and training for success. The above contribution also confirms that choirs are vehicles of change in society. Choirs can also give marginalised people a platform on which they

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can find their voices. Choir activity was also seen as an effective medium for the exchange of cultures. The comments on the next page support this assertion:

> Choral music is good for social cohesion because learners get the opportunity to learn about cultural diversity and different tastes in music. In the process, they improve their communication skills and gain knowledge (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 14).

> I want to give you the example of Newcastle. They present the regional festival in a very big hall and if you get there its packed with a few hundred people: Black people, Indian people, Coloured people, and it is a most fantastic audience. There I experienced what Mr Mandela said when he spoke about the rainbow nation. Twenty years ago, it was not at all the case. Really you experience just good relations and that's wonderful about that absolutely wonderful experience (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 29).

Choir music is a conduit that can be strengthened to result in a new society that is reconciled and based on common values. Such a benefit can accrue to more social cohesion elements such as commitment and relationships between individuals and between groups as well as interracial contact. On the possibility that social cohesion can build from the unity derived from choir competitions, some respondents explained that

> we can be unified through choral music. If we can make it a point that all kids do participate in choral music then we will see the cooperation and unity (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 19).

> Choral music is the one social activity that can pull together a lot of people from different backgrounds and communities into one activity, so choral music becomes a key player in making sure that it is able to pull together people from different backgrounds, class and socio-economic status into one choir, singing in harmony and in unison (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 21).

These inputs suggest that much should be done to encourage more schools to enter choirs as this may assist in increasing the pace of inclusion of diverse members of society within the frameworks of schools. Such efforts can be positive for social integration and social inclusion.

It can be concluded from the above results that there is consensus regarding the notion that choir competitions are indeed a springboard for social cohesion. The evidence points out that ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe have a similar impact on society. Choir competitions can improve social cohesion as they provide benefits that can impact on community networks of mutual support, reciprocity and trust, participation and inclusion, shared norms and values, commitments and relationships between individuals and between groups, learning, fellowship, social capital, interracial contact, social integration and social inclusion, and well-being.

- **Subtheme: Perspectives on change and social cohesion in choir competitions**

Respondents reported that choral competitions in South Africa could be used as one of the engines of social transformation. They paid attention to the changes that have already been made to bring about progress, in order to improve the role and reputation of choir competitions in society. Some ATKV-Applous participants felt that the inclusion of other styles of music in the competition in order to accommodate a wider range of participants was a step towards transformation. The following responses were noted:

> … there were no African pieces included (in the early days). But I was also always adjudicating in the time when this changed. I don't know when this change happened, it must have been in 1994, when ATKV decided that every choir must sing an African song (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 8).

Prescription and language policy changes were also reflected upon:

> I can remember in one year "Die ATKB lied" (the ATKB song by Pieter van Westhuizen) and the others had to be songs composed in Afrikaans, definitely only in Afrikaans and then later on they relaxed the rules. You were allowed to bring songs in English and other languages. And then they changed the whole approach and they said that it was compulsory to include one song in the official languages of our county except Afrikaans and English, not from Rhodesia not from anywhere, but only South African official languages (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 11).

> Something I enjoy about ATKV is its interest in languages and that it brings people together (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 15).

The changes in the rules to accommodate non-Afrikaans choirs were reflected upon:

> So, we introduced the idea of choirs for non-Afrikaans speakers with a section for non-Afrikaans speaking choirs by this time. That opened doors in a way that I (we) could expect it but we were so gratified when we saw how this grew (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent 8).

Despite the changes alluded to above, some respondents were not persuaded that such measures will have an impact on social cohesion.

> I think, from the way that I look at things, racialism is still very rife, in the sense that we see White folks apart and Black folks apart (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 16).

> I think ATKV has to look anew; they need to look to accommodate more choirs. I think they must look to attract more choirs like the World Choir Games. They also need to change the prescribed works. Some years the choices are fabulous, some years you think, "Oh goodness gracious how are kids going to like this?" (Participant in ATKV-Applous: Respondent) 4).

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As to how ABC Motsepe could achieve its central goal of championing social cohesion, as set out in its rule book, one candidate referred to the need to appoint properly trained conductors and adjudicators as crucial.

> … to be honest with you, firstly the ABC Motsepe School Choral Eisteddfod falls under the Department of Basic Education and its purpose thereof is to enforce education at the lower level. If you carry out the mandate correctly, you need to hire the right people who will uphold your mandate. Now if you are managing the competitions as the Education Department and you hire uneducated people what message are you sending to our kids? They are not giving priority to education. They employ people who are not relevant in these competitions, people who don't have experience (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 23).

Some respondents suggested more reforms to improve the outlook and role of competitions. This respondent was of the view that choir competitions did not promote the well-being of participants.

> I think it is time to do away with the competitions mentality and replace it with a performing mentality. Many choirs suffer because they want to compete. But if we instil the mentality of it is not competition, it will be a performance (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 20).

> If I were to conduct the SASCE, if I was maybe the coordinator, I would give everybody something for participation, a certificate or a trophy even if it's not position one. Then maybe positions 2, 3, and first place could maybe get something bigger (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 17).

Administrative issues at ABC Motsepe have been blamed for slowing down transformation. One respondent suggested that if the ABC Motsepe could improve their processes and practices, there would be a greater chance of more White choirs participating.

> Maybe if the truth can be told, we are just not well organised (meaning ABC Motsepe). Time management is the main challenge and they (whites) can't tolerate that. Until we are organised and say ten choirs are taking part let it be so. And stick to the times (Participant in ABC Motsepe: Respondent 19).

These findings are evidence of ongoing efforts to bring these competitions in line with current developments in the new and transforming South Africa. Some of the efforts have helped to change negative views held regarding the ATKV-Applous, namely, that it is a Whites only competition.

Most of the ATKV-Applous respondents believed that many of the changes that have been made have repositioned it into a widely accepted school choir competition. The changes in the rules to include African folk music as a category has been viewed as exceptional by many respondents. The inclusion of the official languages of South Africa in the ATKV-Applous competition has been praised as radical, with the potential to produce a positive spin-off for social cohesion. In the opinion of the participants, such changes could increase the chances of creating links between choir conductors.

The inclusion of indigenous African music would encourage people to make an effort to learn other languages, which could increase the possibilities of interaction between different people. Amid successful changes to advance social cohesion, some respondents suggested that elements of racial division were still evident in the ATKV-Applous. They suggested that ATKV-Applous should do more to change the way in which some South African racial groups still view the competition.

The ABC Motsepe is a competition that was set up to bridge the gap created by previous practices in which the choirs competed according to race. Some of the reforms that can be praised are the introduction of two new categories in the ABC Motsepe to accommodate learners with disabilities and learners from farm schools. This move has been good for social integration because these groups had been isolated in the past.

Although there is consensus that changes in school choir competitions are taking place, some sceptical respondents pointed out that ABC Motsepe has not been able

to attract and retain White and Indian schools in any significant way. This failure undermines the sole aim of creating this contest, which was primarily to ensure that participation was open to all racial groups. It also creates the impression that ABC Motsepe is a competition that only takes an interest in Black schools. For this reason, some respondents believed that ABC Motsepe was not as interracial as it should be.

Other respondents indicated that their frustration with ABC Motsepe was caused by laborious administration and poor time management, which undermines its reputation and objectivity. It can be argued that although ABC Motsepe has introduced reforms, this is not adequate enough to make this competition more attractive to those who did not recognise it. Consequently, such changes do not have impact. This can decrease the social cohesion influence inherent in music competitions.

5.6 Findings from semi-structured interviews

The reflection of the participants regarding their singing experiences in early childhood indicate a link between early music platforms such as churches and early learning centres. The links between schools and other social institutions provide evidence of the ability of music to contribute towards creating social bridges in society. Participants associate cultural music activities such as wedding songs, folksongs, the singing of nursery rhymes in early childhood centres, the singing of hymns in churches and in schools as a way in which social cohesion is created because of the associations and sense of belonging that result from these participations.

Data show that participants were all in agreement that choir training helped them to acquire certain life skills they could use to position themselves in society. They related that the skills they gained in choir singing served as good foundation that led to them taking up conducting roles in their choirs even before they had had any training. This confidence was associated with the knowledge they gained from their teachers and music directors at their early childhood institution such as churches, and early learning centres.

There was a general agreement that choirs contributed to the development of associations and friendships. The participants indicated that this helped them to belong

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in the networks that were created in relation to music participation on the early platforms and in schools. Participants linked their current networks of conductors with choir competitions. They believed that these networks were helpful in their professional development in music.

The participants' current interaction with other conductors competing in the same competitions also reflected features of social cohesion. The respondents viewed these networks as helpful for their professional development in music, specifically choral work.

The addition of non-racial and inclusiveness with the inclusion of new categories, plus the participation of other communities, has been celebrated as making a strong contribution to reciprocal trust and interracial aspects of social cohesion. Including African music has helped learners to understand each other's cultures, as well as causing teachers to request assistance and increase their knowledge about each other's cultures. This has improved the relations between African and White teachers.

The strict approach to the prescription of songs as practised by the ABC Motsepe can weaken social cohesion, thus causing some choirs to lose interest and their loyalty to wane. ATKV-Applous respondents who were interested in participating in the ABC Motsepe blamed the strict policy for prescribing music as the main reason for their loss of interest. Their main concern was the high standards that ABC Motsepe had set for their prescriptions and the lack of alternatives for choirs. A general tone about whether choirs contribute much to social cohesion was that choirs are sources of friendships, culture sharing, community networks, families, skills and social institutions. In addition, choirs can be seen as platforms that can contribute to music sharing and improving chances of social capital among family members.

School management were blamed for not providing enough support to choirs, thus leading to a weak choral culture, which affected attendance and, in some cases, resulted in weak choir teamwork. Sport receives more support than cultural activities such as choirs. Participants felt that sport did not have the same impact on social cohesion as choirs did. Therefore, increased support for choirs in schools can change the school culture positively.

Data showed that choirs were regarded as agents of change with the ability to facilitate inclusion and multicultural participation. ATKV-Applous respondents acknowledged the positive changes in the competitions since African music was accommodated in the competition. They saw this as a positive move towards reconciliation. However, there were participants in the ATKV-Applous who still felt that not much had changed and that racialism was still prevalent. In addition, there were sentiments that suggested that choir competitions were not good for social relations owing to the tensions they bring to choirs and between choirs.

5.7 Data analysis of the reflective research journal

As explained in chapter 3, the reflective research journal was one of the three instruments of data collection in this study. The reflective notes opened possibilities for the integration of the researcher's experiences, opinions, thoughts, and feelings, and may support transparency in the research process (Ortlipp 2008). Below are some entries that the researcher was able to capture in the period between 2015 and 2019. After the reflective journal data were analysed, it became evident that the themes mirrored those that were discussed in the interviews and the document analysis.

In reporting on the analysis of the entries in the reflective journal, as well as the discussion of the findings in the next sections, the researcher, being the writer of these entries, reports in the first person – an approach adopted by Slotnick & Janesick (2011).

5.7.1 Prescribed and selected repertoire / instrumental accompaniment

School choir competitions have not been known to use symphony orchestras as a form of accompaniment. In 2015, however, the Northwest Provincial ABC Motsepe introduced orchestral accompaniment in the championships. For the first time, choirs were exposed to the experience of presenting choral performances while accompanied by an orchestra. The orchestra was used primarily for the accompaniment of operatic solos, duets and small ensembles and choirs. I noticed in that session that most choirs did not cope with the way the orchestra functioned. A good number of soloists couldn't finish their renditions since they couldn't precisely master their entries. This left the

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choirs feeling sad, embarrassed, and crying. Some of the district officials responsible for overseeing the choirs felt frustrated and tried to intervene, which led to tensions.

5.7.2 Background of the organisation: Perspectives on change and social cohesion in choir competitions

In 2016 SASCE got a new sponsor, namely the Motsepe Foundation. The terms of agreement with the new sponsor necessitated several changes, which included the corporate appearance of SASCE to reflect the ABC Motsepe name, to incorporate the colours and look of the ABC Motsepe sponsorship. Other changes included the introduction of new items and new slots for the keynote address by the chairman of the sponsoring company. The new ABC Motsepe programme became lengthy and demanding for both conductors and adjudicators. Prizes were also augmented to include pianos, keyboards, new trophies and large sums of prize money. Most of these prizes were won primarily by choirs from only two of the nine provinces in South Africa, namely KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. This made the competition to appear skewed towards these provinces.

5.7.3 Administration and participation

In July 2017, I was part of the adjudication panel at the national championship of ABC Motsepe. The four-day programme had 27 items, each of which should be performed by 9 choirs; this means 243 competitors in all. While this was a bulky programme to manage, the administrative processes were not commensurate. The starting time of the programme specified that the competition would begin at 9:00 and finish at 17:00 each day. These arrangements, however, were not honoured. On the third day the programme took about 17 hours to complete, beginning at 10:00 and ending at 3:00 the next morning. This did not go well with adjudicators as they had to work when they were exhausted, just to ensure the programme was completed. The last days of the ABC Motsepe competition were characterised by very pressured adjudicators and administrators; this led to mistakes pertaining to the tallying of marks or results being given to wrong choirs. Sometimes it took adjudicators longer than necessary to finalise the results. This attracted suspicions from the audience, some of whom ended up chanting unsavoury remarks directed at adjudicators and administrators.

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5.7.4 Experiencing African music in choir competitions

My observation at all the ABC Motsepe competitions that I had attended, was that the indigenous items required a lot of time to prepare before choirs could go on stage. This item is the highlight of the competitions and very competitive. The indigenous items are the last in the programme; they are often rushed with much pressure on administrators. This setup is unfavourable to adjudicators because they do not have enough time to deliberate objectively before arriving at their decisions. It is also difficult for the tired learners. The same choirs who participated in other categories were expected to participate in the indigenous section. The indigenous performance is lengthy because the item combines two other subitems which were the HIV/Aids and the Via Africa jingles. The adjudication seemed to lack specific standards and appeared to have had many gaps. This created tension among conductors. The indigenous slot was generally followed by complaints from dissatisfied conductors.

5.7.5 Competitive nature of the choir events

The announcement of results in the ABC Motsepe comes with a lot of tension and sometimes hostilities. It seems that winning a prize is not only important for the choir and the school, but for the province as well. In some ABC Motsepe competitions results have led to open defiance of adjudicators' rulings and subsequently to chanting of slogans of dissatisfaction. Sometimes this dissatisfaction was communicated through social media such as Facebook.

5.7.6 Prescribed and selected repertoire

The ABC Motsepe competition's style of prescribing music, without offering categories in which choirs can present music of their own choice, places choirs in a difficult position. This means that choirs are prevented from performing songs that they prefer and can perform with confidence. It also means that they do not have any choice than performing prescribed songs that some choirs find very challenging. In many cases, schools choose not to participate when they found that the music was too difficult for their children. Conductors choose not to enter their choirs in the competition for fear of embarrassing themselves by conducting music that they did not understand. Modern

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and trendy choral music that is appealing to choirs is sometimes ignored by favouring works sourced from the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods.

5.7.7 Reflections and experiences in the ATKV-Applous: Administration and participation

The 2017 ATKV-Applous national finals are remembered as being well managed. The competition started in the early evening (18:30) and ended just before 21:00, which was roughly three hours. The reception for guests was administered efficiently within two hours before the competition began. The programme was well timed and there were breaks between performances. A great deal of socialisation took place before the competition and during breaks. I noticed that parents were present to collect their children once they had finished. I met with many Whites who were keen to have a moment with me to create links.

5.7.8 Political and cultural influences

I noticed that the audiences at the ATKV-Applous were predominantly White and the main language of communication was Afrikaans, whereas the ABC Motsepe competitions were predominantly supported by Blacks with English as the language of communication.

5.7.9 Prescribed and selected repertoire

It is noteworthy that although ATKV-Applous also prescribes music, this was only for one item, while the other three works were selected at the discretion of the conductor. Each choir performed four songs on stage and once they had finished, they were free to join as audience members.

5.7.10 Benefits of choral music towards social cohesion

The Pretoria ATKV-Applous of 2019 was a day programme which started in the morning and went through to early evening. The atmosphere was very friendly. Outside the hall were food stalls and book sales. I observed that learners who chose not to stay

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in the hall socialised with family and visited the stalls. When the competition ended, conductors, adjudicators and guests were invited to dinner. However, even when such an invitation was extended, many Black people did not join the dinner. This could be due to transport or family commitments.

5.7.11 Learning from peers and professionals/experiencing cultural diversity in choir competitions

In 2017 and 2019 the conductor of Elarduspark Primary School (Pretoria East) invited me to assist the choir with an African song as part of the preparation process for their participation in school choir competitions. The first thing that struck met was the friendly reception by the choir conductor and the staff. I also observed that the choir was surrounded by other staff members who provided support in different areas. Children were very keen to learn and very soon we were up and running.

I was invited by the same school for a second time. They asked the me to teach them an African song from scratch, so I chose a Tsonga song. I discovered that the choir did not know that Tsonga was one of the official languages of South Africa and was rather uneasy because they had expected a Zulu or Sesotho song. I assured them that I was convinced that they would enjoy the song and be able to perform it successfully; it did not take long before we had started. I was impressed with the level of interest the children had shown.

Although it was challenging to get the movements right, nobody was discouraged. The children did everything in their power to move correctly. The next time I was contacted by the conductor I was informed that the choir had won their competition with the song, causing the whole school much pride about this achievement. Our relationship has developed to a level where the school wanted the choir to learn more African songs so a partnership between myself and the school had been agreed on. It was obvious that the school management team supported the development of the choir's ability to perform African songs.

5.8 Findings from reflective research journal

The following findings were made from the journal data.

Not all choirs felt comfortable with the introduction of orchestral accompaniment in the ABC Motspepe. This especially applied to schools from rural areas, which could negatively affect the confidence levels of children and conductors.

Reliance on sponsorships along with changes regarding the corporate look of ABC Motsepe could erode the initial purpose of school choral music and the culture of the ABC Motsepe.

Focusing on high priced accessories such as pianos and cash donations could negatively affect the social cohesion focus on the part of role players. Long programmes, with many items such as speeches, could affect the flow of a competition and erode the camaraderie that was intended as an outflow from the event. Too much focus on the competitive element of winning can affect the fellowship and commitment aspect of competitions.

Poor time management at the ABC Motsepe could result in a loss of interest and fear for the safety of children. This was also mentioned as one of the reasons for White schools not being interested in enrolling their choirs in the ABC Motsepe competition.

The high standard and requirements of prescribed music could have a negative impact on the level of interest in participating, resulting in a low number of choirs participating. Choirs from rural and poor backgrounds may feel inadequate, thus choosing to move their participation elsewhere.

Although the ATKV is an Afrikaans cultural organisation and the use of one language as the mode of communication is understandable, this could create the impression that ATKV-Applous did not value other cultures, which could result in choirs having no sense of belonging. This could also reduce the multicultural nature of participation both by the choirs and followers.

In the next three sections the researcher investigates how the data collected in this study relate to each other. In order to arrive at this, the researcher conducted a careful process which started with overviewing the document data by first looking at how the two competitions complemented each other and how they were different. This was followed by conducting an overview of the interview data which combined experiences about ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous. After conducting the overviews, the researcher realised that there was a need to check whether there was any tension or compatibilities between the documents and the respondents' experiences. This process culminated in the final step under the overview of data which is the amalgamated findings. These are merged findings, resulting from interviews, documents, and reflective journal data.

5.9 Tension between the data sources: interviews, documents and journal data

The milieu of choir participation in South African schools is vibrant and progressive. Over the years, the two competitions in this study have introduced new measures and reforms to open up opportunities for participation by learners from all racial groups. This includes changed rules that reflect fair and inclusive participation for all interested schools. Although the ATKV-Applous is situated within an Afrikaans cultural organisation and has reached out to other cultural groups, there were still voices among participants who felt that racial barriers continued to be too evident.

This view was expressed by one of the ATKV-Applous participants who raised a concern that ATKV-Applous was still culturally Afrikaans and choirs from African communities were still seen as visitors or guests in the competition. She suggested that the song selection policy needed to be open to allow all choirs, including those who sing contemporary music, to participate. Some participants felt that ABC Motsepe was not doing enough to make choirs from White communities feel at home, owing to the music prescribed. Although the ABC Motsepe is open to all public schools, there are still many choirs from White communities that had never even heard of the competition.

Some participants were opposed to the idea of having two choir competitions for schools, one with a bias towards White communities and the other with a bias towards

Black communities. These participants suggested that the two be merged into one inclusive South African school choir competition. Some participants felt that although ABC Motsepe had introduced new categories to include farm schools, these school choirs were still perceived as outsiders, especially since a separate category had been created for them. The reasons why ABC Motsepe created this category were positive and a step toward inclusiveness so that the competition could be made accessible to more school choirs. At the same time, however, the special category might have had a negative effect on school choirs from rural areas, who could view themselves, or be seen by other groups, as inferior.

Rule 2.7 of the ABC Motsepe states that a choir can only be directed by a conductor who is in the employ of a specific school. This can be seen as non-progressive and limiting. Participants pointed out that some schools did not have choir conductors and, therefore, needed to invite outside conductors. Some participants felt that some rules were too vague and difficult to implement. Rule 3.11 of the ABC Motsepe, which excludes choirs that do *izitibili* (action songs) for folklore or indigenous music was cited as an example. This rule is insensitive to choirs, particularly from townships, that do not know how to sing and dance according to various African indigenous cultures, but can only perform action songs. Other cultures were clearly not accommodated as their indigenous music was not included in the competition. Such groups include the San, Afrikaans and Coloured communities.

The system of prescribed music was another cause of tension for conductors/adjudicators. Some conductors felt that the prescribed music was too demanding and foreign to them and the learners. The level and standard of the prescribed music was too high, and it did not suit the needs of the school choirs. Many schools in the ABC Motsepe lacked adequate resources to perform the prescribed music. Some prescribed music was based on operatic compositions which were meant for professional singers and not for learners – particularly not for learners in rural schools. Rule 3.2 of the ABC Motsepe discriminates against schools with learners from Grades R to 9 because these schools were expected to sing in the same category as schools with learners from Grades 9 to 12. The situation mentioned above is further complicated by rule 2.6 (South Africa, 2016), which prohibits any alternative category to be formed. This same rule made it difficult for interested ATKV-Applous choirs to

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take part in the ABC Motsepe. Another challenge relating to prescribed music was that if a choir from ATKV-Applous would like to perform in the ABC Motsepe, they needed to prepare two different programmes, one for ATKV-Applous and the other for ABC Motsepe. ABC Motsepe does not have categories for choirs to perform any other items besides the prescribed ones. On the other hand, ATKV-Applous provides for only one song of prescribed music and the rest are for choirs to choose freely in a democratic manner. Despite the fact that ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe have worked hard to improve participation and remove divisions of the past, there are still barriers related to colour and cultural differences in both competitions.

By identifying these tensions one can conclude that some conductors who would have wished to enter their choirs in the ABC Motsepe would become sceptical because their choirs were either restricted or would find it hard to adapt once they were in the competition. This implies that despite the reforms alluded to earlier, some school choirs are still not able to participate in this school choir competition. The general impression is that ABC Motsepe is still basing its criteria for defining the concept "choir" on the outdated idea that a choir should comprise 60 voices, or consists of a four-part harmony system. This is another cause of tension between policy and practice, because some choirs are differently configured, but can still impactfully render music. In the current times the look and feel of a choir depends on the mission of the choir, which may be a reflection of the culture of the school that the choir represents. In the views of adjudicators and conductors, this gap in the rules contradicts the efforts towards diversification mentioned earlier.

The general interpretation of the documents creates the idea that schools may only enter their choirs if all choir members are attending the relevant school. This approach may constrict the chances of choir competition impacting on all schools. Some schools may never be able to have choirs that meet some requirements such as SATB, because of the absence of suitable voices to sing tenor or bass. Another reality on a practical level is that there are many youths who are no longer of school-going age, but may still be interested to participate in choral singing. The reality is that there are learners of school-going age who are not attending school due to various reasons. It would help if the documents for the two competitions, particularly ABC Motsepe, were to be amended to be more inclusive and cognisant of the existing reality within and

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outside the school environment. From the way in which the ABC Motsepe documents were conceptualised, it is clear that the elements of social cohesion and other aspects such social inclusion, multiculturalism and social justice were not considered. It is important that choir competitions such as ABC Motsepe, which were intended as a conduit for social transformation and reconciliation, to be sensitive to change and day-to-day developments in the social space.

5.10 Compatibilities between policies and experiences

In spite of the tensions identified between the three data sources used in this study, there are many areas were the three complement each other. Taking advantage of these common areas in the rules, practice and emerging reality can be of crucial importance in helping to make these competitions relevant and useful as platforms for convergence between youths of all racial backgrounds. In the three data sources, the following compatibilities were observed.

All the documents read from ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe show one common purpose, which is to organise choir events in the form competitions. This provides choirs with opportunities to come together in one platform to test their ability in a contest. This opportunity creates a new opportunity from all schools to meet with each other in one common platform – be it ATKV-Applous or ABC Motsepe. In this case, learners get to know about each other and develop consciousness about existence of other cultures by way of learning new languages, dance and music. This can create an opportunity for social relations that go beyond choirs, which can translate into friendships and new associations. This does not only apply to choir members. Conductors and adjudicators may benefit from these opportunities as well.

The second observation was that data from the three sources complemented each other. Data show that competitions should be run in an orderly manner to ensure fair outcomes and cordiality. This was supported by the views shared by conductors who indicated how singing together helped them to create new partnerships with colleagues from other schools who they would never have met if they were not part of the competitions. Such relationship led to agreements to share platforms in concerts and other initiatives outside of the competitions. Some teachers reached out to help others

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to prepare their choirs for the final championship. Some respondents alluded that meeting with other music professional through the choir competitions helped them to polish their skills further.

The third indication of a relationship between the three data sources was that choir competitions can create a big movement which can galvanise resources from different sources such as business, professional organisations and multinational organisations such as the United Nations and European Union. Some of the speeches read as data are positive about the role of choir competition as change agents in a previously polarised society. Such examples were found in the speeches of the ministers, and chief executive officers responsible for these competitions. In the case of the ABC Motsepe, the document data show that participation increased over time and all groups registered their choirs for participation. ATKV-Applous documents show how this competition broke away from an Afrikaans organisation into one that included all other races who were interested in taking part.

Data show how choir competitions, have over time, become an annual meeting point for different schools to share their cultural heritage of music. Data show that many ATKV conductors and adjudicators broke their stereotypes about music by becoming aware of music of other cultures. This was done by introducing other categories which were never considered in the past. This included the introduction of African music in their choirs.

The above compatibilities in data show that on the whole choir competitions are relevant as platforms that can be used to promote mass participation and increase social inclusion among young school-going South African youths. The aspect of belonging is a special feature of social cohesion because human beings feel safe when they have a confirmed sense of assurance for recognition and affirmation. As was noted in the interviews, conductors were very happy with their affiliation to either one of the two competitions. Some went as far as mentioning that they would never take their choirs to any other platform except for the one that they know.

Data from interviews also show that respondents feel better and empowered as they are able to create links with schools from other cultures, thus enriching their social

networks and reach. They believed that children had benefited immensely and that the level of enjoyment had increased. This has helped their choir members to learn how to build bridges with other choirs, including other cultures, and establishing strong bonds leading to trust in one another.

The rules, guidelines and policies prove to be useful for conductors and adjudicators respectively, since they provide guidelines and conditions of participation and play a role in holding everyone accountable. The documents provide the code of ethics for adjudicators. This knowledge is valuable for credible results and confidence in the competitions. Competitions are also based on plans which are useful, because they lay out the targets and outline the budgets which guide the procurement of the services of external expertise. For practitioners, therefore, documented ideas are valuable for the successful functioning of the competitions. According to one of the reports in the ABC Motsepe, several workshops aimed at developing conductors and learners in farm schools were held. These workshops could only be possible through plans that guided the procedures for a plan of action.

This training could lead to the realisation of social cohesion and learning, which can only be harnessed through interactions between conductors, outside experts and learners. Some informal opportunities for learning that were cited in the report were:

- Life skills training and team building sessions to which farm school learners and their conductors were exposed.
- Formal learning opportunities that conductors benefited from.
- Regular planning, including vocal training for leaners, piano accompaniment sessions with small ensembles and conducting skills.

Some reforms to transform competitions into multicultural platforms offered opportunities to learners from all backgrounds; these address the need for integration that is greatly lacking in South Africa. The learners' views are that these developments helped their choirs to diversify in terms of the repertoire they selected. Other complementary benefits for social cohesion were that, with the inclusion of other languages and indigenous music, more social integration should develop. A form of social cohesion resulting in the initial introduction of African indigenous music in the

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ATKV-Applous was that the whole competition became a centre of attraction for many schools. This category was later developed into a permanent category. The inclusion of traditional African music as a prescribed aspect of the ATKV-Applous competition has led to a further development, namely that after a few years of performing traditional African songs, some choir conductors approached the organisers to request permission to include commissioned original choral compositions in which African and Western musical style elements were merged. This was allowed and has led to a wide variety of newly composed South African music by White and Black composers.

The inclusion of the new contributions to the South African choral repertoire is an exceptional example of the celebration of diverse music styles in creative, musical products. This has also led to the enhancement of social cohesion through choral competitions.

These kinds of developments can contribute to trust and reciprocity as well as learning necessitated by the conductors' need for new African music. The introduction of music of other cultures has the potential to change the negative perception of "the other" that may have prevailed for a long time. This could be applied to choirs as they have also reaped the benefits from these relations. Cooperation by way of combining projects has helped to integrate cultures, thus leading to improved interracial relations. The ATKV-Applous policy decision to introduce new categories such as the non-competitive category, open category and the usual competitive category has created multi-level participation that has opened doors for many types of choirs. Such reforms have a positive effect on the social cohesion benefits of participation and inclusion, which may result in improved interracial contact, which can lead to more social integration and social inclusion.

The budgetary decision that winning choirs would be offered accommodation and transport was very useful for conductors who would like their schools to participate but were struggling without support from their school management. This could ensure that choirs that have never travelled before, could have this opportunity. These choirs would not only have a chance to meet and interact with learners from other choirs, but also from other parts of the world. The social cohesion benefit related to this

opportunity would include length of stay in community, commitments and relationships between individuals and between groups and having new learning opportunities.

The policy decision was agreed upon to introduce some compulsory items in the ABC Motsepe competition where all schools were required to sing the National Anthem, compose a jingle about HIV/Aids and recite the preamble of the constitution, can increase awareness of all of the above aspects of South African life in the school sector. Knowledge of, and taking part in, a joint performance of the Anthem, could contribute to the enhancement of patriotic awareness. The preamble of the constitution could improve social cohesion in the sense that learners will become vigilant and avoid participating in conversations that undermine or demean others.

5.11 Amalgamated findings

From the three sources of data used in this study it can be concluded that school choir competitions in a contemporary South Africa are in a transitional phase of change and transformation. They provide a new and exciting opportunity for the young to interact and share their musical heritage. This includes other aspects such as language and dance. It shows that school choir competitions can be seen as suited platforms and conduits for new social relations which can help learners, conductors and adjudicators as well as parents to participate in a new inclusive social platform. Professional networks for conductors and adjudicators where sharing was experienced helped to break stereotypes about each other's music.

Although data show many positive indications of social cohesion in how conductors shared views, there were areas that related to how management of schools undermined the importance of choirs. The data show how choirs struggled with support from school managers who preferred other extra-mural activities such as sports. This shows that managers of some schools still needed to understand the role that choir music can play in the lives of children and society as a whole.

Other data show how social cohesion can be hampered by prescribed music in competitions. Prescribed music, particularly in the way in which it is done in the ABC Motsepe, is seen as a stumbling block to participation and creativity; something that

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could derail social cohesion. This was also the case in ATKV-Applous as some respondents felt that the competition could do more to foster inclusiveness and develop its culture from a mono to a multicultural competitions. It was highlighted that being part of a choir and participating in competitions benefited not only choir members as individuals but also for the conductors and audiences, which could lead to social cohesion. The data analysis and findings are discussed in chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In chapter 5 the data and findings generated in this study are discussed. In chapter 6 the researcher discusses the findings and presents the conclusion of the study. Chapter 6 is structured to respond to the three secondary research questions. Firstly, by discussing the experiences and perceptions of choir conductors and adjudicators on choral singing as a vehicle to strengthen social cohesion. Secondly, by focusing on the experiences and knowledge gained by conductors and adjudicators during their participation in choral competitions, through the lens of Transformative Learning Theory. Thirdly, reporting on the contribution of ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous to the development of social cohesion in South Africa. The chapter concludes with a discussing of the limitations of the study, recommendations for future studies, and the conclusion.

6.2 Discussion in response to secondary research question 1:

What are the experiences of choir conductors and adjudicators and their perception on choral singing as a vehicle to strengthen social cohesion?

6.2.1 Experiences and perceptions of choir conductors and adjudicators on choral singing as a vehicle to strengthen social cohesion.

- **Personal history**

The findings from the interviews and the documents show some convergence in that choir competitions offer a constructive environment that provides platforms for music making experiences. Data further indicate that participants also benefited from the relations developed during such interactions. Such relations are enhancing factors for social cohesion because participants in choir competitions became contributors in the re-engineering of society in sharing personal learning with others and fellowships with their fellow choir members and society at large.

- **Experiences of early music platforms**

When reflecting on personal history in their early involvement with music, respondents referred to both non-formal and formal institutions such as churches, early learning centres and schools as social bridges in society that could be used by people to create new social relations. Such platforms could provide opportunities for strangers to meet and work together in a choir or musical project. Participants expressed that such platforms provided an opportunity for individuals to participate in singing and making music both as choir members from one school and as a conglomerate of choirs from different schools. Respondents also noted cultural and community music practices in society, such as wedding songs, folk songs, singing of nursery rhymes in early childhood centres, singing of hymns in churches and in schools as conduits of social cohesion because of the associations and sense of belonging that they experience when participating. Such experiences have been noted in early studies. Research that resonates with the above experiences of respondents advocates that singing is a primal and universal human expression (Wang, 2015). Elmer (2011:1) weighs in by describing singing as "the earliest and universal musical expression". Tsang, Friendly and Trainor (2011:31) agree that "[s]inging is a ubiquitous human behavior and plays a significant role in human culture and socialization". These findings mean that early participation provides the benefactors with an opportunity to enhance their musical knowledge and experience, as well as their ability to form bonds leading to social cohesion through music platforms that are provided in the early lives of individuals.

It can be concluded that data from both interviews and documents suggest that choir competitions are a constructive platform for fostering social cohesion through music making, where participants form bonds from the relations and interactions between individuals and associations with other choirs. The findings from the reflective journal (cf. 5.7.7) support the idea that a lot of socialisation among attending adults and participating individuals takes place during choir competitions. This is evident because data show that different choirs from all provinces participate and are supported by their own followers, which present opportunities for professional interactions – especially during breaks and meeting sessions. Such evidence can be proven from the data provided by both the ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe.

With regard to the importance of early musical experiences and the participation of individuals, specifically the youth, in formal and informal education to foster social inclusion, Oxoby (2009:11) advocates that these early musical experiences should be fostered as a lack of this exposure could hinder and diminish chances of inclusion for young people. This supports experiences and views shared by respondents who suggested that participation in choir singing helped them to develop their own identity through interactions with others in groups. Research shows that development of identity is fundamental in the life of individuals. Korte (2007) describes identity as a cognitive self-construction that differentiates how an individual relates to others and how they want to be different. Hargreaves et al. (2002:1) agree that music is one way to formulate and express identity, since it provides "a fundamental channel of communication: it provides a means by which people can share emotions, intentions and meanings even though their spoken languages may be mutually incomprehensible".

The findings suggest that the forming of personal and musical identity through participation in choir activities, competitions in this instance, contributes to social cohesion. As Veblen (2008:17–18) points out: "… each of our orientations – as musicians, teachers, trainers, facilitators, therapists, learners, mover-and-shakers ... prompt us to recognize and reflect on the many ways we enable and empower people to develop their cultures, artistry, creativity, identity, health and 'community'". This study reveals that the expression of identity through choir singing can facilitate a need for inquiring into the nature of musical identity and the role it plays in fostering social cohesion.

According to the respondents, participation can develop young singers as well as other role players into people who seek to relate with others to master self and others. The finding that early music experiences pave the way to choral involvement leading to social cohesion is supported by Emde (2006) and Bechhofer (2008). They suggest that sharing meaning through mutual relation and cooperating with others by being in partnership with others can enhance mutual coexistence. Cloete (2014) and Kleber et al. (2009) are of the view that early participation facilitates proceeds of social capital, which is one of the elements found in social cohesion. With regard to social capital as one of the outcomes of choral participation, Klein (2013) suggests that social capital

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can be derived openly or tacitly as an investment for the future and, therefore, it must be seen as a resource and not just a subset of social structures.

Cloete (2014) explains that social capital is not developed for personal gain but for the benefit of those who participate. This supports the findings in this study that social institutions of non-formal nature such as churches, alongside formal institutions such as early childhood centres and schools where individuals participate in singing, can have a crucial influence on how individuals view themselves and how they view others, thus contributing to mutual relations that contribute to social cohesion. This view is reflected in Bottini's (2018) dimension of the micro level of social cohesion, which involves interpersonal trust and social support. This implies that social cohesion can be harnessed through small efforts made in small social formations and not necessarily through big public platforms.

Friedkin (2004:410) suggests that groups are cohesive when group level conditions are producing positive membership attitudes and behaviour and when group members' interpersonal interactions are operating to maintain these group level conditions. Fredkin's (2004) point about group level conditions of social cohesion is supported by findings from the interview data. The findings in this study indicate that some of the benefits for learners involved in music as singers or players lie in making a contribution to the re-engineering of society because they share personal learning and fellowship with others and members in their choirs, which contribute to society at large.

- **Accepting the conducting role (with or without prior acquired skills)**

The interview findings show that many participants accepted that being a member of a choir not only afforded them with the opportunity to be included, but also prepared them to acquire some life skills that helped them make a contribution to others in society. They referred to the confidence that they had developed from the knowledge they had gained from their teachers and music directors during their early participation in such platforms as churches, early learning centres and schools. Some music directors and teachers served as role models on how to view own and others' music and to fostering cultural respect leading to social cohesion. Tabane and Human-Vogel (2010) support this finding by asserting that schools are key places where social

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cohesion can be fostered, and it is for this reason that learners should be taught to regard schools as places where all races meet and feel at home. The findings in this research claim that school choir competitions are extended platforms of schools in fostering social cohesion.

When exploring the value of participation in choral activities, researchers such as Hayward (2015:32) point out that music can serve the role of mediator between individuals and groups by creating the conditions for forming social relationships. In a similar way, Joseph and Southcott (2014) link choir participation to social cohesion by pointing out that singing in choirs can provide social support and interactive opportunities through which members achieve a sense of fulfilment, autonomy, pride and community appreciation.

Participants in this study referred to successes they had achieved as novice conductors. The findings in this research suggest that, regardless of the fact that some participants never enjoyed formal training as choir conductors, they were indeed able to lead their choirs and enter competitions with the skills gained as members of choirs and experiences as choir members participating in competitions. This finding echoes Bailey and Davidson's (2005) view that active participation in singing may increase self-belief, enhance social interaction skills and stimulate cognitive development. The two authors affirm that involvement and interaction among young people amount to learning and creation of connections that will give them self-reliance and a sense of belonging in society.

The research findings show that participants utilised the opportunity provided by choirs and competitions to reflect on their knowledge and to decide what they could adopt to improve their current levels and to enhance their own and others' lives. Linking to Bonshor (2014) who states that the contribution of music, particularly choir activities, create self-reliance in group members, the findings confirm that some of the participant choir conductors went on to successfully lead choirs in schools. Such successes, according to Bonshor (2014), can lead to choral confidence, both for individuals and collectively, and are partly derived from the singers' sense of cohesion and community. This means that once they have acquired the skills, they use them to change others' circumstances by making a positive contribution in their lives. The above points reflect

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the view that participation in choir competitions can enhance a sense of togetherness and high aspirations to work together among participants (Ehrlin, 2016).

- **Learning from peers and professionals**

Data from the interviews show that choirs contribute to the development of associations and friendships among participants, which they found to be especially useful for the enhancement of partnerships and collaborations of efforts between conductors. They referred to the networks of communities that were created in relation to music participation. Participants referred to their current communities of conductors as products of choir competitions. The other benefit identified by the respondents was that competitions were able to create a community of professionals who shared meanings and built social connections, sharing common interests or shared beliefs – "the community of interest" (Laing & Mair 2015:253). Participants also believed that these networks were helpful for their professional development in music.

Research shows that learning from others can contribute to development of cultural capital. This phenomenon can enhance the abilities of individuals to expand their horizons from "the accumulation of knowledge, behaviors, and skills that a person can tap into to demonstrate one's cultural competence and social status" (Cole, 2019:n.p.). The kind of cultural capital that conductors accumulate in such an environment can be attested as objectified cultural capital. Bourdieu (1984) refers to objectified cultural capital as cultural objects or goods such as works of art, literature, music and films. The findings reflect a sharing of cultural capital necessitated by choir competitions as an important link to social cohesions. The research findings indicate that participants' current interaction with other conductors competing in the same competitions also reflects signs of social cohesion. This finding indicates that choral events have the potential of what Livesey et al. (2012:11–12) describe as "building friendships, improving bonding and co-operation, nation-building and social transformation".

6.2.2 Prescribed and selected repertoire

The findings regarding prescribed and selected music for competitions shows that a lack of consideration for the age of singers when prescribing music can impact social

cohesion in choir competitions in a negative way. The level of difficulty of the music can lead to choirs feeling inhibited and intimidated. Insisting on irrelevant and outdated styles can dampen interest, leading to choirs looking elsewhere. A lack of room for choice of music that resonates with the background and circumstances of the choir can harm opportunities for inclusion of choirs not accommodated.

This resulted in some schools pulling their choirs from the competitions. Some respondents explained that their choirs were no longer participating in ABC Motsepe because they could not cope with the high level of prescribed music which was too difficult for young people. Data from the reflective journal shows that difficult repertoire traumatises learners, leading to low confidence in the competitions. Some choirs could not complete their renditions because they could not hold the key or cope with the orchestral accompaniment which was one of the requirements for the song. The document data, therefore, portray ABC Motsepe as a system that discourages participation in that they do not allow choirs to exercise freedom to sing music of their choice. This can be viewed as one of the inhibitors of social cohesion, because some choirs may feel excluded and forfeit the opportunity to socialise with other choirs.

The above point was reflected in the views of some of the respondent who complained that prescribed music in the ABS Motsepe competition included operatic songs that were not only too difficult, but also old fashioned. This respondent sighted this as one of the reasons why many choirs from White schools were not interested to participate in this competition. This view resonates with Dzorkpey (2011) who notes that ABC Motsepe's focus was too much on prescribing operatic solos not suited for learners of school-going age. Choirs such as those from the disadvantaged backgrounds,. like farm schools, could be excluded as they are generally under resourced, thus affecting opportunities for inclusion and fellowship, which are aspects associated with participating in choir competitions.

On the other hand, data show that participants found it easier to participate under the ATKV-Applous because of less demanding music choice and more permitting rules for selection of music, thus encouraging participation and increasing chances for inclusion of many types of choirs. It was found that more categories in which choirs could participate were created over time in the ATKV-Applous competition. These categories

accommodated many choir formations to participate, which even included choirs consisting of members who no longer attended school age and choirs that were not interested to compete, but to showcase their talent. This data also show that allowing conductors more freedom to choose repertoire that they preferred, had positive dividends for social cohesion and inclusion.

The above findings show that prescription and selection can contribute to social cohesion if salient elements, such as those listed earlier, are considered and maintained. It shows that the type of music prescribed can have an impact in how choir competitions are viewed. Unreasonable expectations on choirs can inhibit social cohesion, while an easier and less restricting system of prescription could encourage more participation resulting in more inclusion and better chances for social cohesion.

The role of repertoire in social cohesion can be traced in some studies. Literature shows that song selection and repertoire prescription are important as elements of success for choirs. Millard (2014) indicates that close to 50% of participants agreed that participation in competitions is hugely influenced by the way in which conductors choose music for the choir.

Many studies underline the important role of the choice of repertoire and indicate that the choice of repertoire is challenging and can have a huge impact on a choir's performance (Mulgrew 2018; Van Aswegen & Potgieter 2010). It is, therefore, imperative that repertoire be carefully selected and graded to suit the needs of all involved. The findings in this research confirm that prescribed music that does not reflect and echo the interest of participants can have a negative influence in how they view the festival or competition.

The observation and views as shared by conductors and adjudicators, as well as information from documents and the reflexive journal point to a lack of consideration on the aspect of social cohesion, which can be derived when correct and suitable repertoire is selected. The findings reveal that conductors indicated the need for a less inhibiting selection of prescribed music. In their views, good selection and appropriate choices of prescribed works for competitions would change the negative views held by conductors from other competitions. Schools require music that will help to develop

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learners instead of putting them under too much pressure and causing them to lose self-confidence. This should include choice of music with positive social values that would have a positive effect on their moral compass. The absence of consciousness of using music as the nectar that connects, will render choir singing as just a routine exercise, whereas the full use of songs as a language that can be understood by members may lead to more awareness of the values that music (choir singing) plays in building community bridges (social cohesion).

6.2.3 Choral singing, competitions and social cohesion

Choir competitions have become borderless and universal. One of the well-known choir movements, the World Choir Games, connects many people around the world. Through this organisation many relations and linkages have been created. According to the SAFM sport programme (22 June 2018), about 300 choirs from all parts of the world participated in the 2018 World Choir Games in South Africa, and the majority of these participants were school learners. Many of these choirs from across borders entered into relational agreements with South African choirs. The level of social cohesion could be seen in the pleasure that audiences expressed during these events.

The well-being and economic advantages that South Africa experienced as a result of hosting the event and having many international choirs coming to South Africa, was evidence that choir competitions could contribute to social cohesion. This is consistent with Joseph and Southcott (2014) who attest that the benefit of choir singing contributes to well-being, optimism and healthy living. Choir competitions provide for opportunities to exchange important assets such as music and culture. Relations and links are created in competitions. Literature confirms that competitions can play a role in quelling prejudices among cultures, political ideology, race and language (IFCM, 2017). The findings in this study show that the spirit of competitions that has followed both ATKV-Applous and ABC Motsepe reflect the same idea contained in the IFCM focus. Competitions will always be part of human activities. According to Millard (2014), it is inconceivable to imagine life without competition. Despite the competitive elements in these choral events that divide groups according to the judgement of performance levels, this research offers evidence of choral competitions contributing to fostering social cohesion.

Adding non-racial and inclusive rules, new categories, plus the participation of other communities to competitions has been celebrated as having a strong contribution to trust and interracial aspects of social cohesion. The addition of African music helped learners to understand each other's cultures, as well as assisted teachers to look for help and more knowledge about each other's cultures. This improved the relations between African teachers and White teachers. The above role that choirs can play in society, both locally and international, fits into Bottini's (2018) social cohesion scheme, which includes micro-level social cohesion (relations and interactions among individuals), mezzo-level social cohesion (relations and interactions among individuals and groups), and macro level social cohesion (relationships among individuals and society) (cf. 2.20).

According to documents analysed in the study, choir competitions start in a school, develop into a community and ultimately become a national event. According to the findings from the interview data, some of the choir members became part of international opera houses. One well-known example is Pretty Yende[17]. This supports the fact that choir competitions are not only for winning, but also for development of opportunities and links among people across the globe – a finding confirmed through data from the reflective journal. Another benefit is the enhancement of image and expansion of the profile of the said schools. Schools that are known to have good and successful choirs are also known to be peaceful, successful and popular with communities.

6.2.4 Perspectives on social cohesion in choir competitions

The findings from document data from both the ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous reflect a process of reforms that can be said to have increased participation and increasingly multiplied proceeds that relate with social cohesion. These proceeds are seen in trust relations that are being enjoyed by members, inclusion, and social capital with elements such as bonding and bridging among participating choirs. These changes have had a positive impact on multicultural participation at school choir

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[17] Pretty Yende is a South African operatic singer, originally from Piet Rietief in the Mpumalanga province. She is one of the singers who was discovered through ABC Motsepe and is currently based in Germany.

competitions. With specific reference to ATKV-Applous, which, for many years was racially biased and culturally specific, multiculturalism has grown significantly. This school competition has since opened its doors for all races and repealed divisive conditions for membership such as to require members to be of Christian religion to qualify. These barriers are no longer a concern, thus making ATKV-Applous more accepted by all South African cultural groups. Reforms in the ABC Motsepe include opening up for all public schools and all racial groups have made this competition an inclusive platform seeking to bring all schools under one music platform. These changes have enhanced the acceptability of both choir competitions and as such increased opportunities for social cohesion. One of the key reforms that have changed the face of school choir competition in both competitions was the decision to accommodate all 11 South African official languages.

ATKV-Applous made another historical change by opening doors for indigenous African cultures as part of the new developments. This led to conductors and choral singers learning African music and language as well as dance – something that was not allowed in the past. Regarding the ABC Motsepe, one significant and critical change was the inclusion of previously disadvantaged learners, most of whom were from farms and special schools. These reforms are in line with Haecker's (2012) call for a new move to embrace all communities, despite their socioeconomic background. In the international context, transformative development to inclusive participation was also raised by the Council of Europe's (2010) Social Cohesion Strategy (CESCS). The vision of CESCS is to promote equal and effective enjoyment of social rights and to mainstream social cohesion. This vision is reflected in the findings showing that both ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous, although operating from different strategic positions, are cognisant of the cardinal role that choir competitions should play in a diversified country like South Africa.

Embracing all communities is positive for social cohesion because it can breed a culture where people learn to share and reciprocate – particularly at school-going age. Van Aswegen and Vermeulen (2014) as well as Onyeji (2009) observe that music and choral singing possess the potential to act as change agents in order to contribute to cultural and social transformation. The above changes identified in the two competitions can make a big impact in society, because they can breed social cohesion

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elements of belonging, trust, fighting exclusion and marginalisation, and provide upward mobility. This means that experiences in choir competitions can have an impact on the lives of other learners who are outside these schools. Cloete (2014) articulates that social cohesion is a phenomenon that is regarded as a positive value in social relations that should be sought in circumstances where people, groups or larger aggregates share a living space. In line with the above considerations, the new South African Social Cohesion Strategy that was designed to address the long-standing concerns relating to a lack of unity among South Africans was promulgated (Palmary, 2015), particularly to address these dynamics. The South African National Development Plan (NDP) echoes a need for government and civic organisations to promote and celebrate multilingualism; arguing that such a move can promote social cohesion (South Africa, 2012). Choir competitions are not exceptions to these developments, which means that if authorities can take advantage of the national policy development such as the above, then choir competitions can play an influential role in social cohesion. This means that the transformation of school choir competitions to incorporate new and inclusive measures can lead to the creation of social cohesion in the South African school landscape.

The changes in policies towards transformation of choir competitions as noted in the documents analysed, should not be seen as a solution to all challenges. Attitudes of resistance should be approached with appropriate methods. Palmary (2015:64) explains that "when social cohesion becomes aligned to nation-building there is ample evidence that positive effects need not always be the outcome". This means that some people or groups will not see changes in a positive light; instead they will see this as forcing them to do things differently and move from their comfort zones. However, regarding this study, the views that dominated the discussion were that choral participation could be used to enhance inclusion and bring people together. Some stated how working with other racial groups helped them see things differently. Others acknowledged their growth from working with people from other social groups. Howie and Bagnall (2013) advocate the need for individuals challenging perspectives, mind-sets, levels of learning processes, and meaning. It can be concluded from these views that conductors agree with the need for change that can lead to a new united and inclusive South African society.

Findings indicate that school choir competitions are an important vehicle that gives meaning to the lives of all people – including learners in schools. Choir music is one of the social vehicles that are instrumental in preventing learners from engaging in social ills and giving them a sense of belonging. Kohn (2013) agrees that competitions are a common denominator in society. Kohn (2013) says that competitions are justifiable for expressing human nature, increasing productivity, building character, and increasing motivation. Findings from the interviews suggested that school choir music can create lifetime relations – including those that can lead to marriage. Respondent 11 referred to the union of her parents as an example. It was also reported that schools participating in choir competitions were doing well in terms of results and internal relations. These schools are at peace with neighbouring schools and communities.

Findings also indicate that participating in choirs and choir competitions can groom members and prepare them for roles such as conducting or accompanying their choirs, even when they had never received any formal training. Bailey and Davidson (2005) found that taking an active part in singing may increase self-belief, enhance social interaction skills and stimulate cognitive development. The two authors further affirm that involvement and interaction among young people amount to learning and creation of connections that will give them a sense of belonging in society.

In chapter 2 the researcher referred to transformative learning as a process of learning where individual role players reflect on the way in which they make meaning and examine their beliefs that need modification. The above findings show that participants utilised the opportunities they had in choirs and competitions to reflect on their knowledge and then decide what they could adopt to improve their current level to one that was higher and useful for their lives and those of others.

Bonshor (2014) confirms that the contribution of music (choirs in particular) creates self-reliance in group members. Findings confirm that some of the conductors went on to successfully lead school choirs. Such successes, according to Bonshor (2014), can lead to choral confidence, both for individuals and collectively, and are partly derived from the singers' sense of cohesion and community. This means that once they have acquired the skills, they use them to change the conditions of others by making a positive contribution towards them. Findings from the reflective journal show that choir

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competitions are not only liked for giving schools a platform to interact with others, they also create opportunities for supporters to belong to a platform where they can contribute to the increased effort, learning curve and excitement by supporting and celebrating those who have attained success. Such is experienced each time a choir ascend the stage and are cheered on with heroic songs sung in their celebration as heroes of the provinces from where they come. Although the ABC Motsepe is characterised by a tight and competitive atmosphere, it is generally a jubilant platform that has a huge following from across all provinces. Findings from the journal data also show that school choir competitions are not only followed by school goers, but also by society in general. This validates Bottini's (2018) points mentioned earlier.

6.2.5 The role of management systems

Inadequate support for choirs by school management and the lack of a proper balance between sports and cultural activities in schools were blamed as the main cause for the low impact of choirs as agents of social cohesion within specific schools. This was rather the opposite of the policy objective outlined in the South African school choral policy framework (referred to as the protocol in chapter 2). In this policy framework, choir singing is regarded as key to social cohesion and as such schools are required to participate and make schools social places. Some participants explained that managers of schools did not show much commitment to music and their focus was on sport – particularly rugby and soccer. This lack of support for choirs in schools inhibits possibilities for learners to interact with learners on a bigger scale. It deprives learners from interacting with learners from neighbouring schools and as such they miss out on taking advantage of social networks that could be created through relations created at choir competitions. When choirs are not supported, most of the learners could lose interest and resort to other measures or even indulging in social ills. It can, therefore, be concluded that the lack of a good balance between cultural activities and sports can stifle the potential for a broader and inclusive involvement in choral programmes in schools. A lack of support for music can also deprive learners of the opportunity to benefit from what Einarsdóttir (2012) terms "music in identities", which refers to using music as a resource to serve a purpose wider than the individual in developing other facets of personal identities, such as national, cultural or ethnic identities. Welch et al.

(2009) advocate that singing is very important for its ability to strengthen the identity of the school and make pupils feel proud to be part of the particular school.

Another challenge mentioned by respondents was that male learner participation in choirs was low, which made it difficult for schools to keep choirs (with a mixed SAB or SATB setting[18]) going. According to respondents, this problem can be blamed on poor understanding of the role that a choir can fulfil in the social and educational life of learners. Some boys wanted to participate but feared to be stigmatised as weaklings by their counterparts. Giaever (2018) also acknowledges that some men perceived choral singing as an activity suited for women.

Some researchers advocate that music can contribute to the successes of some schools. Haecker (2012) reinforces that music is a symbol of identity and that it can play the role of maintaining and conserving culture.

In other interviews, however, respondents indicated that choirs were the mainstay of participation in schools and continued to gain a lot of attention. This resonates with the South African Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga, who stated that choral music upholds unity in diversity, national reconciliation, social cohesion and a national identity among young South Africans of school-going age, and that it can play a role of addressing deep-rooted cultural, traditional, and indigenous division to breed as sense of belonging, and definition of South African national identity (South Africa, 2016).

The fact that a certain number of conductors referred to a lack of adequate time for choir rehearsal because school authorities prioritised the curriculum, indicates that some school principals lack awareness about the value that choirs can add to social cohesion in the schools. Giaever (2019) advises that arts should be used increasingly as alternative methods to achieving change and learning. Giaever (2019) argues further that choral singing has a role of causing people to listen and respond to each other, something that creates room for engagement and sharing of emotion.

Literature indicates that not participating in choirs can deprive learners of opportunities to participate in sharing cultural information and their culture by teaching others songs

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[18] SAB refers to choirs consisting of sopranos, altos and one group of male voices. SATB refers to choirs consisting of sopranos, altos and two groups of male voices (tenors and basses).

and performance ideas (Kashima et al., 2019). This could also deprive the older generation from sharing their musical heritage with younger generations through interactions that could be provided by choirs (Kashima et al., 2019).

Obstacles such as the above can affect the existence of choirs, consequently affecting the prospects of development of social cohesion. Jeanotte (2003) echoes that social cohesion is both holistic and reciprocal, which indicates how components contributing to creation of social cohesion are connected. Therefore, if management elements that lead to a thriving choir culture in schools are not well coordinated, then choirs will not play a role toward fostering social cohesion. Therefore, the views that were raised by conductors and adjudicators in the interview processes will need to be regarded as essential.

When culture bearers share folk song with groups from other cultures, powerful pathways are opened to strengthen cohesion (Kashima et al., 2019). The literature, therefore, shows that choir music has the potential of contributing to schools that are socially cohering, with possibilities of improving relations among learners from different cultural backgrounds, thus increasing chances for truly multicultural schools.

6.3 Discussion in response to secondary research question 2:

How do the two school choir competitions (ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous) contribute to the development of social cohesion in South Africa?

This section is discussed under the following themes: 1) Choir competitions as change agents, 2) Choir competitions create professional networks for conductors and adjudicators, 3) Competitions can play dual purposes, 4) School choir competition offers a multicultural platform, 5) The social benefit of being a choir member. These themes integrate the themes of the three data sources discussed in Chapter 5.

It should be noted that the researcher's line of thought regarding the usefulness of competitions to society is not cast in stone. Other researchers have taken a different view from the one that this researcher has. Studies such as the one conducted by (Millard, 2014) point out that choir competition was detrimental to creativity and that

when focus was on competition, certain educational aspects of music got lost. Millard (2014) relates competitions with negative elements that verge on insanity. These include nervousness, expectation, tears, deceptions, and ecstasy – among others. Although these should be noted as part of reality, this study focused on other aspects that were raised by participants that ranged from excitement, learning, fellowship, self-confidence, perseverance, learning, sharing, and friendship. The two competitions investigated in this research are different in nature and context. The ATKV-Applous is a subsidiary of the Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurvereniging; a cultural movement that supports the Afrikaans language and culture. ABC Motsepe, on the other is a post-apartheid school choir forum funded by the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE). By investigating these two choir competitions, the study explored on whether school choir competitions can contribute to social cohesion. Findings in this study show that promoting social cohesion through choral competitions is possible.

6.3.1 Choir competitions as change agents

In Chapter 2, South Africa's choral music history was described as having endured in a hostile environment, which Bouwer (2009) characterised as a tainted relationship between races based on a lack of trust and difference based on race, resulting in different choir music styles. Document data led to findings presenting ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous as two competitions that have chosen the new route to transformation. These two choir competitions have also aligned their business with the values found in the new South African constitution, which are human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom. Both these competitions have introduced new and generous rules/guidelines and policies to increase diverse participation. The language policies are now more inclusive and sensitive to participants' diverse needs. A finding noted from the document data indicate that the state of relational hostility described in the history of both competitions has been eradicated. Choirs that have proven their worth by booking their place at the final championship are now given incentives such as transport and accommodation at the final competition. Such changes which show regard for mutual trust and social inclusion and accommodate multicultural participation can contribute to significantly to social cohesion.

6.3.2 Choir competitions create professional networks for conductors and adjudicators

In most of the interviews, reference was made to conductors who contributed and added value to the lives of respondents. Experiences shared in the interviews explained how interaction in choirs did not only result in developing singing, but cognitive and social skills were also developed as other relations between conductors and between conductors and adjudicators were forged. In these connections lie the unifying factor from sharing of knowledge. Sharing of knowledge can be equated to other domains of social cohesion, which are common values and a civic culture (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). This domain refers to whether the role players in choir competitions share similar "aims and objectives, based on common moral principles and codes of behavior" (Forrest & Kearns, 2001:2129).

In the case of ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous, conductors and adjudicators are working together, sharing ideas and entering into collaborations through concerts and competitions. This was evident from the testimonies given by many respondents accounting how they were encouraged to conduct choirs. They acknowledged that their current knowledge base was partly gained from their former choir conductors and advice of adjudicators who later presented workshops and gave them guidance. These relations created platforms of support and development. Arasi (2006) supports the idea that adults who have taken part in school music might project the influence of their music education in a wide variety of reflections that combine intrinsic and extrinsic values.

One respondent attested that a choir conductors' workshop was an important source of his success as a conductor. This implies that the knowledge shared in choir competitions instils self-belief that results in self-confidence. It is also apparent from the research that leadership skills are acquired during the course of participation as singers are given certain roles such as voice leader. Furthermore, the conductor coordinates and guides singers (Jansson, 2013) in choirs. This means that the relationship between choir conductors and choristers transforms into social cohesion as do the level of trust and bonds, which facilitate coherence between the conductors and the one who serves as coach or mentor. This relationship was demonstrated in

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the experience that the conductors and music inspectors had after the competition, where the inspector volunteered to demonstrate some techniques to a potentially good conductor who struggled to master the technique. This took place in a spontaneous and instantaneous manner, as it happened at the competition without any prior arrangements. The conductor believed that the gesture left him with a positive memory, which he still reveres to this day. Bonshor (2014) surmises that choral confidence is affected by the amount, content, style and delivery of feedback, especially from their respected peers and musical experts. From the above views it can be argued that some of the singers who received support from their conductors when they were still young, immature choristers, developed into very successful conductors. William (2007 in Bonshor, 2014), demonstrates that if a sense of belonging is not fostered among choir members by other members and those in authority, they will not realise their full potential. It means that cohesion happens when people feel acknowledged and supported, which leads to the development of relations based on trust. For choir competitions, this element of trust between professional and upcoming musicians is a great contribution to society because these conductors will later cascade this knowledge to those who, like them, are in need.

Some respondents revealed that early participation in music, be it through choir singing or playing an instrument at home or school, enhanced positive, personal development. But this can only happen with the help of others, which leads to bonding between participants. With regard to choirs, this bonding also leads to connection and links, which create trust. Choirs teach young members to share and reciprocate. Haslam (2014) suggests that group engagements contribute to cognitive function. Similarly, Ferrer at al. (2018) conclude that choral singing contributes to the development of the intellect and moral values. The benefits of being a member of a choir can lead to bonding, cooperating, developing friendship and enjoying broader relations among members (Clift et al., 2010; Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Cohen et al., 2006; Silber, 2005; Livesey at al., 2012). It is also evident that people associate and befriend each other due to the common interest in choral and sporting events (Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010).

Johnston (2010) notes that music is one of the art types that inspires people to be proud and bound together by indissoluble bonds. The research findings reveal that the

relationships created during participation in choir competitions are very important for social cohesion. These showed when certain members, who once participated and belonged to one choir, met at other places later in their adult lives. When an opportunity arose for one of the peers to be elected, either to lead a choir or in any other capacity, it became much easier for one of the known old choir friends to be preferred over the unknown others. People who know each other are likely to give each other preference over those with whom they have not interacted.

It was finally concluded that meeting with someone through participating in choir festivals or competitions would result in relationships that could become social bonds, which, in turn, could lead to the forming of social bridges of friendships away from home, leading to links among choirs in different parts of the world. Although studies that accounted for how social bonding was developed did not refer to choir competitions specifically, Pearce et al. (2016) indicate that these interactions result in the integration of wider social groups. It can be noted that choir singing results in integration, as singers are forced to do things together and cooperate and work towards a common purpose. This is born from the perspective that regular and positive contact determines the degree of trust among participants (Stolle et al., 2008 cited in Tabane & Human-Vogel, 2010).

The above analysis explains why young conductors can take up opportunities to lead a choir even when they are still inexperienced. They rely on the kindness and reinforcement and appraisals that they receive from their peers. The testimony given by one of the respondents stated that when he arrived at university, some of his childhood choir friends approached and requested him to lead the choir because of their previous participation in the school choir. His decision to lead a choir was motivated by the trust and expression of confidence in his abilities.

The ABC Motsepe competition has a tradition of permitting spontaneous participation from the audience to sing in support for their choir when they ascend the stage. In turn the rest of the audience joins in to complement the song in support. This happens throughout the competition. The effect thereof is that choir competitions become a place where every person in the hall is given a chance to sing and make extended friendships rather than being anxious about winning. In this regard, choir competitions

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are a perfect contributor to social cohesion where everyone belongs and feels accepted.

6.3.3 Competitions can have dual purposes

Encouraging learners to participate in school choirs has been noted in the literature as crucial in the educational lives of learners. Literature also indicates that learner who participate in choirs perform well in their studies. Ferrer, Puiggali and Tesouro (2018) observe that learners who are part of choirs acquire some important life values such as respect and friendship. Some of the participants' views have echoed the findings of researchers such as Ehrlin (2016) who agree that choral singing creates a sense of unity and aspiration to work together in the learning process. The ATKV-Applous documents project it as a school choir competition aimed to celebrate culture. On the other hand, ABC Motsepe is mandated to bring unity among choirs that were previously fragmented. Such roles cannot be taken lightly in a society such as South Africa where consciousness of cultural rights and national unity are still at stake. Studies have identified the importance of this function in society. The OECD (2012) states that culture makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgement and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices.

Durrant (2005) emphasises the need for national and cultural identity which can be emboldened by the sharing of different cultures among citizens. Sharma (2011) lists conservation and promotion of culture as one of the important roles that schools play in society. Choral activities can influence how learners represent the school culture (as well as their own cultural background), develop as individuals in the choir, inculcate values of the school, share and develop unity of purpose, tolerance, caring, and learning skills. According to UNESCO (2009:2), one of the characteristics of culture is that it is a source of identity, innovation, and creativity. Sharing of music platforms through competitions can, therefore, be seen from this perspective of people coexisting in their own right, and interrelating by sharing their creation or sharing what is common among them through singing. This is positive for social cohesion.

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Singing together can play a role in many facets of human well-being, including strengthening solidarity towards peace. Samama (2012) agrees that choir singing can be used to restore peaceful reforms. Peace can only be possible where there are shared norms and values. It means that choir competitions can play a role in articulating the need for social unity and reconciliation. The role of government in advancing social cohesion by using schools is, therefore, not far-fetched. In the case of ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous as conduits of culture, these competitions can be viewed as instruments of cultural dissemination aiming "not to only influence our cognitive schema, but also to mould the way we think of ourselves and how we see others seeing us" (Bhugra 2009:333).

The findings relate to literature supporting the fact that choir competitions can exist for a variety of reasons. The USA for Africa Project of 1985 with the well-known song, *We are the World*, is an example of choirs serving specific purposes in society. This choir was envisioned to focus on poverty alleviation and galvanisation of social benefits for deprived societies. Another example is the notable South African musical, *Sarafina*, which advocated for freedom from political rights beyond the apartheid system. Benefits that were accrued from such endeavours have led to the restoration of some countries such as South Africa, from the apartheid system to democracy. Therefore, the existence of ABC Motsepe as an establishment of government cannot be dismissed as merely political, but it should also be regarded as an advancement of socio-political rights. In this study, the ABC Motsepe, as a competition for schools, has its own potential to accrue social cohesion among those who participate. On the other hand, the findings suggest that ATKV-Applous creates social cohesion benefits specific to its purpose, which is to preserve cultural rights. What remains essential is that both platforms are intended for school learners to interact in an empowering environment striving to mitigate social disharmony.

Joseph and Southcott (2014) reiterate that communication provides support that can further result into broader social benefits such as integration, commitment, involvement, networking and connectivity. Both competitions provide opportunities for these aspects to be realised. The findings show that ATKV-Applous has derived a mileage of support since opening its doors for other cultural groups to participate under its auspices. The introduction of African indigenous items in their programme and

involvement of African music specialists as adjudicators paved the way to a wider cultural inclusivity for both diversity in participation and repertoire. The ABC Motsepe's choice to focus on the previously disadvantaged learners led to a boost for this competition in terms of sponsorship and support from multinational entities such as the European Union and UNESCO.

6.3.4 School choir competition offers a multicultural platform

In this finding the researcher noted that many conductors may not have chosen a culturally diverse programme had it not been for the need to perform folk songs as part of the competition programme. Many audience members might not have been exposed to the performance of culturally diverse music performed by culturally diverse choirs, had it not been for attending the participation of their children, family members or friends in choir competitions. Some respondents regarded the inclusion of African music as a challenge, which offered them an opportunity to reflect and adapt their attitudes which they harboured against other cultures. These participants explained how they changed their perspective about how people should relate. Some conductors explained how they were able to overcome rejections they had experienced from their own communities for introducing African music in their choirs. One of the respondents affirmed that it was important to learn from one another. Van As (2014) confirms that in a multicultural choir, members are given a chance to experience each other's expressive communication, especially when singing traditional songs of the cultures represented in the choir. Such experiences can cultivate intense understanding, which lead to the modification of their perceptions about others. Barrett (2008) concludes that a multicultural approach is needed and offers an insight into social capital awareness in different cultural contexts. In this study, it means that to achieve social cohesion in a post-apartheid South African landscape, some form of interracial contact should be fostered. This idea is supported by the findings as some of the conductors indicated that working across cultural divides enhanced relations.

One of the respondents explained how her knowledge about African cultures was developed after having shared several platforms with African adjudicators. Some choir conductors who were still afraid to include African music in their repertoire alluded to the fact that their choirs had not met or shared any platform with African choirs. Thus,

their choirs were equally disadvantaged. One of the respondents explained the inhibitions that showed among White parents when African audiences stood to dance along with the choir and then ululated thereafter. From the journal it has become clear that many White parents are loosening up to embrace the way other cultures respond to music. Some of the parents joined in and celebrated cultural diversity as opposed to negative resistance.

In the understanding that choir competitions are platforms that can afford people to share cultures, Respondent 26 said that she had learned a few things about other indigenous languages and customs. "You go through a whole cultural experience trying to understand what the song is about. Worlds would have never been connected unless there was a competition where there are choirs who sing these". Johnston (2010) attests that music possesses the power to transform individuals in conflict situation.

In other responses, conductors of ATKV-Applous, who previously had no interaction with African music, expressed their experience as very exciting for them and the learners. They believed that the ATKV-Applous audience that mostly comprised of parents of participating learners have also changed their point of view and enjoy, as well as support, the inclusion of African music in the ATKV-Applous, which is regarded as enrichment to the ATKV-Applous. Some conductors went as far as stating that African music had brought flare and excitement to the competition. They appreciated the excitement resulting from colourful dances, bright attire and drumming as some distinct features that attract attention among the multitude of choirs. It is, therefore, evident that the multicultural platform provided by choir competitions indeed contributes to fostering social cohesion in the South African society.

6.3.5 The social benefit of being a choir member

Findings from the interview data show that participants are conscious about the importance of social links between people (in this case, learners as the beneficiaries). They expressed their views on how this changed their perspectives to realise the broad impact that choral competitions had on the lives of different stakeholders. They mentioned that choral music benefited learners, conductors, adjudicators and parents.

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Besides their own benefits, respondents were keener to mention the learners' benefits in their responses. The above views correlate with existing literature on this subject. Joseph and Southcott (2014) refer to social benefits such as integration, engagement, participation, networks and connectedness. In addition, the International Forum for Choral Music (IFCM, 2017) reported that competition plays a role of quelling prejudices between cultures, political ideology, race and language. On the benefits for choristers it was found that choirs contribute to the development of positive self-image, ability to get organised, sense of belonging and team dynamics.

Parental participation by way of supporting and following their learners affords them a chance to interact with other parents as they converse in the foyers before, during and after the competitions. In the South African context, this is very important as our society is in the process of transforming itself from the polarisation and divisions of the past. According to Bouwer (2009:1), South Africa was characterised by "stained communication between races … distrust … segregation between black and white ..". which led to "distinctly separate choral styles" (cf. chapter 2). Sharing of public space in this fashion produces bonds among members. These bonds serve as glue that connects people (school learners). The effects of the glue are known as social capital, which includes creation of social networks, and relationships between adults and learners that are of value for the child's development (Coleman, 1988; Procter, 2009). This means that choral music creates closely knitted relationship between choir members. These relationships keep the choir together as one family. Learners also benefit from the networks that are created due to the relationship between the choir and other choirs. Whiting and Harper (2003) and Langston (2011) identify the proceeds of social capital as reciprocity and obligations, trust, norms and values, learning, and membership. The presence of these elements was acknowledged by many participants, as some referred to their former conductors as mentors, others referred to lessons they had learned from adjudicators, and the joy of knowing other customs and languages of other cultural groups.

From the interviews emerged the perspective that choir music was not only of good service to learners who are in good social standing, but especially beneficial to learners with challenging circumstances. Some respondents indicated that it afforded them an opportunity to intervene in the lives of learners who had experienced family

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misfortunes, such as violation of their human rights, and those coming from poverty-stricken backgrounds to feel part of the group (belong). It also helped learners who left school due to their dependency on drugs, for example. Luhrs (2015) confirms that being part of a choir provides members with the opportunity to meet people, to develop intimate relationships and benefit from peer support when experiencing difficult times associated with adolescence.The accrual of bonding and bridging contributes to social cohesion, which results in the inclusion of the marginalised and general wellness of society.

6.4 Discussion in response to secondary research question 3:

How can the values and assumptions of conductors and adjudicators in the light of experiences and knowledge they acquired during participation in choral competitions, be interpreted through the lens of Transformative Learning Theory?

In this section, Transformative Learning Theory serves as framework to explain the meaning, nature, and challenges associated with a phenomenon (choir competitions), often experienced but unexplained in the world in which we live, so that we may use that knowledge and understanding to enhance social cohesion in more informed and effective ways (University of Southern California, 2018). Transformative learning encompasses the nature of change and the processes leading to the way individuals see and make meaning of the world (Jones, 2015). It is about humans' lifelong construction of meaning based on their experiences (Cranton, 2016). In the interviews, participants described music as a stimulant that has a psychological effect on individuals, which creates the need for children to become conscious and develop self-realisation. They also viewed singing in schools and competitions as opportunities for people to enjoy singing together and learning how to connect with each other. They expressed the view that choir competitions afforded young people an opportunity to develop a sense of working together at an early stage by way of singing together.

Participants expressed the role of singing as a step towards creating one of the elements of social cohesion, namely, social capital. Based on these experiences and views it can be noted that choir conductors and adjudicators do not only equate choir competitions with winning and conquering. They also associate it with building

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communities and strengthening relations among choir members. Choir participation was also explained as playing a positive role in teaching young people how to take responsibility and respect others in their roles, thus developing the ability to function in a diverse environment. In their personal lives, respondents expressed that their role in choir competitions helped them to develop their own identity through interactions with others in groups. Some participants indicated that their new understanding of choir competitions helped them to gain life skills to be used in society. Some participants indicated that choir competitions contributed to the development of association and friendships among participants, which they found to be especially useful for the enhancement of partnerships and collaborations of efforts between conductors and adjudicators. They referred to the networks of communities that were created in relation to music participation. Participants related their current communities of conductors as products of choir competitions.

When comparing the essence of transformative learning as finding meaning through reflection and discourse (Mezirow, 2018) to Swab and Johnson's (2019) consideration of competition as reaching further than winning to include (finding meaning, "truth and wisdom" through "actions, behaviors, and arguments"), some connection emerges. Referring to a 2009 study by Heather Reid, Swab and Johnson (2019:147) write that "some philosophers argue that competition is not really about winning, but instead, it shares the same underlying goal of Socratic philosophy, which is finding truth and wisdom in the face of unknowable uncertainty".

Considering Mezirow's (2018) term "perspective transformation" (the process of critical reflection in which "we come to identify, assess, and possibly reformulate key assumptions on which our perspectives are constructed" (Dirkx, 1998:4) and influenced by Freire's concept of "conscientisation" (Mezirow, 2018:114), it seems that conscious reflection plays a key role. This relates to Dirkx (1998:3) who explains "critical consciousness" as "a process in which learners develop the ability to analyze, pose questions, and take action on the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that influence and shape their lives". Through conscious reflection, role players in choir competitions reconsider elements in the musical process that influence social cohesion. Examples from the data include the development of an understanding of culturally diverse sensitivities, challenges and advantages. This understanding

influences the way in which adjudicators judge and offer feedback, the way conductors communicate with their choirs, audiences and community, and the involvement and interaction between school choirs and culture bearers. Conductors from White schools explained how they worked with Black communities to acquire knowledge on how to teach African music. Conductors in these schools invited certain individuals whom they deemed able to share skills in African dance and music. Such opportunities created professional partnerships among African and Afrikaans conductors. This phenomenon is growing every year. In the interview data one of the Black participants reflected on the relationship that developed between her as a conductor and the other conductor from a White school. According to this interviewee, this led to many collaborations which resulted in the choir from Winterveld in South Africa being invited to Germany.

The two pillars of TLT are reflection and discourse (Mezirow, 2018). This means that conductors are in a position to engage in dialogue with choristers in fostering respects and appreciation, not only for the music of self, but also that of others. Mezirow (2018) describes discourse as the involvement of role players who are able to participate "fully and freely in dialectical discourse to validate a best reflective judgement" (Mezirow, 2018:118).

Participants were of the view that the selection of prescribed music for young learners should be based on consideration of age and cultural dynamics. Findings from the interview data also show that participants are conscious of the fact that schools require music that will help develop learners instead of putting them under too much pressure and causing them to lose self-confidence. This should include choice of music with positive social values, which would have a positive effect on their moral compass. This conscious, critical perspective underlines the importance of fostering an educational environment that invites dialogue and freedom of reflection, resulting in change (Dirkx, 1998; Fetherston & Kelly, 2007).

In the context of this study, it is meaningful to investigate Mezirow's (2018) view on cumulative transformation as "a progressive sequence of insights resulting in changes in point of view and leading to a transformation in habit of mind:" (Mezirow, 2018:118). This means that organisations or institutions decide on policies (which might include transformative strategies). Policies implemented in choir competitions may influence

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the perceptions of groups and individuals (such as school choirs, conductors or adjudicators), but do not necessarily result in individuals or groups holding the same values and communicating this accordingly.

Fetherston and Kelly (2007:267) explain that "transformative learning involves profound shifts in our understanding of knowledge, the world, and ourselves". Cranton (2016:19) adds that "if a person responds to an alternative habit of mind by reconsidering and revising prior belief systems, the learning becomes transformative". Therefore, TLT can only take place if those involved are willing to reflect and adapt. As Taylor (2017:9) confirms: "fostering transformative learning is seen as a deliberate and conscious strategy". ATKV-Applous Respondent 7 reflected on how she had to stop her habit of first wanting to get confirmation before doing something. She reflected on how a lack of self-confidence weighed her down. She was conscious that she was not a trained conductor. However, she said that once she had started realising her role and responsibility as a leader, she changed her ways and developed confidence. This helped her to become a successful choir conductor. ABC Motsepe Respondent 20 reflected that folklore of other cultures was important because it helps one to relate more and more easily with other cultures since knowing their music background. This feedback from respondents resonates with Cranton (2016:18) explaining transformative learning as situated within constructivism: "we develop or construct personal meaning from our experience and validate it through interaction and communication with others".

Wang, Torrisi-Steele and Hansman (2019:241) acknowledge the challenging task of educators to convey transformative messages to students and community to "be successful in guiding students to develop wisdom through critical reflection and dialogue". In a racial sensitised post-apartheid community, even choral music, specifically touching on culturally diverse repertoire, are not free from the strains of political turmoil. ATKV-Applous Respondent 16 reflected that living in a multicultural society, it was important for us to develop our learners to know that they must know and understand other cultures so that they can respect other people as well. Respondent 7 reflected that White people needed to be educated about African music, that it includes dance and that when they dance it should not be understood as being chaotic. Respondent 8 reflected that she was open-minded since coming into contact

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with African people and sharing their music. Respondent 26 said: "I have learned quite a few things in the other indigenous languages, from singing in those languages; I have learned a lot from the customs of those people …"

This resonates with Cranton's (2016) and Bond's (2014) claim that discourse on culturally diverse topics may be both uncomfortable and enlightening. In a South African context of racial divisions and racial sensitivity in the post-apartheid milieu, it is worthwhile to examine the notion that we could "decolonize our understandings of multiculturalism in music education" by addressing the silence that sometimes results when we name race and racism explicitly (Bradley, 2006:2–3). A step in the direction of social cohesion through choir competitions is to encourage open communication and discourse on the role of and appropriate performance and adjudication practices of culturally diverse folk music. ATKV-Applous Respondent 4 complained that adjudicator's feedback, specifically on African music at regional level, contradicted with feedback at national level. This is discouraging because conductors take time to research and put in a lot of work to ensure that they render well-prepared work.

Referring to the concept of "color evasion" (ignoring or neglecting cultural differences) Schwarzenthal, Schachner, Juang and Van de Vijver (2020:323–326) argue that the neglect of addressing racial and cultural issues implies a lack of embracing opportunities to grow and to learn about cultural diversity. Culturally responsive teaching is closely linked to transformative learning as a cultural connecting experience in choir singing. ATKV-Applous Respondent 3 reflected that ABC Motsepe was very strange and not appropriate for schools as it was focused on difficult operatic music not suitable for schools. He explained that choirs did not have the pianos and also that many learners were not musically literate.

The respondent's view aligns with Addleman et al. (2011:56) whose point is that the most crucial goals of teacher education should be to "enhance students' intercultural competence". Fetherston and Kelly (2007:268–269) underline "reflection" as "key to the achievement of transformation" and that transformative learning "involves creating spaces for critical engagement and dialogue". The way in which conductors communicate their attitude toward music of others, culture bearers and music of own to choir members, circling to the school and wider community, can have an influence

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on social cohesion. Expressing her reflection about how she ultimately managed to introduce African music to her choir, ATKV-Applous Respondent 12 reflected that when she introduced an African song for the first time, one of the choristers confronted her and threatened to leave the choir. In spite thereof, she decided to continue, which resulted in the chorister leaving. ATKV-Applous Respondent 2 reflected that it was not easy to find suitable African songs. She also said that African songs were too difficult to teach to the choir.

In the same way, the manner in which adjudicators assess choirs and communicate their feedback as well as ensuring that those who have knowledge about the African indigenous music are part of the adjudication panel, communicate the willingness to take part in the enhancement of social cohesion.

Through TLT, role players in the choir environment are encouraged to remain lifelong learners, within an environment where they are challenged to be "actively engaged in critical reflection and dialogue as they question and evaluate their assumptions and thought patterns" (Addleman et al., 2011:59). Conductors and adjudicators can be regarded as lifelong learners and are in the position to establish changes in practice through critical thinking and reflection leading to "emancipatory learning" (Wang & Hansman, 2019:244). ATKV-Applous Respondent 26 reflected that her encounter with African music was a learning experience – especially about the language and African customs.

When exploring the possibilities of choir competitions to develop social cohesion, it seems as if the one choral element that connects all singers is folk music. One platform for sharing culture is provided by folk music as choral repertoire, to pave a potential way for fostering social cohesion through choral singing (Van Aswegen & Potgieter, 2010; Barrett & Vermeulen, 2019). It appears that folk music as choral repertoire (a significant prescribed genre in choir competitions) offers the best possibilities for opening doors to transformative learning and gateways leading to social cohesion. Respondent 7 expressed that her coming into contact with Africans made her curios about the music of other cultures such as the Zulu, Xhosa and Setswana. Another respondent commented that White people needed to be educated about African music. They needed to realise that African music included movement

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and that if an African person stood up and danced, that should not be viewed as an offence. The same respondent said her heart was open and urged others to allow themselves to understand.

The findings in this research support Addleman et al. (2011:59) who maintain that TLT embraces critical reflection and discussion as "cultural immersion" that opens possibilities for wider perspectives and fosters culturally responsive transformative learning. The analysis and findings lead the researcher to believe that due to choirs' involvement in choir competitions, role players are challenged to consider that the meaning of their participation stretches further than musical fulfilment and development. Apart from the meaningfulness of music itself, choral singing provides pathways to make sense of the self and others, as well as making contributions to the world we live in (Livesey et al., 2012).

Competitions present the need to choose, study and perform cultural music from others, thereby questioning pre-perceptions of self on culturally diverse music and the need to reach out for help from culture bearers. The findings reveal that initial discomfort in performing music of others, leads to the development of socio-cultural bridges, acceptance and appreciation. ATKV-Applous Respondent 16 reflected that White teachers needed to realise that living in a multicultural society requires learners to know about other cultures and that it lies within the teacher's responsibility to ensure that this happens.

This connects to what Cranton (2016:15) refers to as "evolving a way of seeing and interpreting the world and developing accompanying values, beliefs, and assumptions that determine … behavior". Interactions between culturally diverse individuals and groups, often necessitated by the preparation of folk songs for competitions, open rich possibilities of fostering cross-cultural understanding and forming relationships and friendships. ABC Motsepe Respondent 20 reflected that knowing the folklore of other cultural groups was important because this enabled a person to know other groups and to relate better with their music. ATKV-Applous Respondent 8 reflected that White audiences did not understand why Black audiences reacted by way of ululating or dancing. She insisted that it was time that this changed.

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These examples point at sharing a body of experience (Mezirow, 1997), cultural capital or community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Addleman et al., 2011). The concept of boundary objects (Tsurusaki et al, 2013) provides the link between folk music in choir competitions and social cohesion. ATKV-Applous Respondent 11 reflected that African music brought a sparkle to ATKV-Applous. She further said that when it was time for the African music item, the audience became lively with excitement.

These examples confirm the explanation by Tsurusaki et al. (2013:6) that transformative boundary objects "hold different meanings in different social worlds, but have a structure common enough to be recognizable and serve as a means of translation across social worlds".

Taylor (2017) lists three key concepts that play a role in promoting transformative learning: "promoting inclusion (giving voice to the historically silenced), promoting empowerment (not self-actualization, but belongingness and equity as a cultural member), and learning to negotiate effectively between and across cultures" (Taylor, 2017:9). Promoting culturally diverse music through choir competitions offers status to folk music and may contribute to enhancing the voice of historically silenced groups, or newly marginalised groups. ATKV-Applous Respondent 15 reported that learners in her choir loved the African songs because of the vibrant rhythmic movements that they had to explore.

To conclude, transformative learning theory is about the longing of humans to seek meaning throughout their lives (Cranton, 2016; Taylor, 2017:5). To construct meaning of choir competitions, reaching further than musical goals towards social cohesion, open dialogue, as a deliberate strategy in the choir environment (Taylor, 2017; Dirkx, 1998; Fetherston & Kelly, 2007), can promote critical consciousness or conscientisation (Dirkx, 1998). The process of seeking meaning, reflection and discourse often originates in an environment of tension and leads to transformative learning as changes "in which we transform problematic frames of reference" (Mezirow, 2018) to construct meaning and contribute to a better society.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The results of this study cannot be generalised as the focus of the study was on only two varied school choir competitions in South Africa. The fact that the participant population of this study was limited and cannot be regarded as a broad representation of the diverse South African population, adds to the limitations of the study.

Some of the ATKV-Applous respondents conducted their interviews in Afrikaans, therefore, a few of the extracts used in the data were not original, but translated. Some ABC Motsepe respondents were unresponsive or sometimes they did not finish the interview because of a busy schedule, as they were mostly only available during competition events.

For meeting with ATKV-Applous conductors and adjudicators, the researcher mostly relied on the help of his supervisor, especially for the snowballing effect for need for reference. Fewer documents were available regarding ATKV-Applous and the researcher had to rely on respondents as well as Möller (2006) to offer better insight into existing documents.

The use of two choir competitions in one study presented several challenges. One was that the two competitions were based in two different organisations with different agendas. Data analysis proved to be challenging since the researcher became tempted to create comparisons between the two, although the main intention of this study was not of a comparative nature, but to determine how school choir competitions in South Africa contributed to social cohesion.

Although bracketing was used to avoid conflict of interest, it remained a challenge for the researcher to take an objective stance and to strive to separate the role of researcher from that of being an active participant in one of the choir competitions.

6.6 Recommendations

With regard to school choir competitions, the emphasis should be on the creation and awareness of non-competitive aspects that can add value to experiences of individual participants and choirs, as well as contributing to nation-building. These non-competitive benefits should be advocated in policy documents, rules/guidelines and should be communicated on public platforms.

School choir competitions should find themselves continuously in a transformative state to develop into platforms that embrace differences and diversity.

Prescribed repertoire for school choirs should carefully be selected to suit the nature of specific choirs, taking into consideration, age, developmental stage of choristers and the availability of resources. Organisers of school choir competitions could expand existing training opportunities for conductors and choirs, including an emphasis on the role of choral singing towards social cohesion.

The lack of developmental opportunities for adjudicators should be addressed. These events should focus on adjudication knowledge and skills, but also include fostering an awareness of the role that choir competitions can play towards social cohesion.

More non-competitive school choir festivals on a national platform, with a specific focus on celebrating diverse South African cultures could contribute to strengthening social cohesion in a non-competitive environment.

ABC Motsepe should consciously reconsider bureaucratic red tape and vague rules that might hinder participation and social cohesion.

There is an existing wealth of excellent folklore performances of choirs participating in both ABC Motsepe and ATKV-Applous. The valuable African as well as Afrikaans songs (sometimes including choreography and dances) could be turned into education resources such audio visual aids to be shared. This will enable a much wider variety of the school choir community to embrace South African diversity through singing and strengthening social cohesion.

The topics of adjudication practices in choral competitions and how adjudicators are prepared and continuously developed for the task as adjudication are not addressed widely in current literature. More adjudicators involved in more South African choir competitions and festivals could be involved to seek a better understanding of how evaluation decisions and possible elements of bias could influence outcomes and hinder or promote social cohesion. An analysis of adjudication reports will give valuable insight into the factors linked to cultural identity play roles in the adjudication process.

6.7 Suggestions for future research

The purpose of this research study was to investigate how school choir competitions in South Africa contribute to creating platforms leading to social cohesion. Rather than focusing on the performers (school children participating in choirs), the researcher decided to focus on choral conductors and adjudicators and their feedback on how they perceived the role of choir competitions as a potential vehicle to enhance social cohesion.

More research is needed to further understand how choral music and active participation in collective singing can contribute as a unifying factor on a socio-political level. Future research should seek to increase the number of choir conductor participants from different cultural backgrounds to gain insight into the role of choral singing and choir competitions or festivals on social cohesion in a broader South African choral landscape.

This study included a discussion of two South African school choir competitions' policies, but future research could show how policy choices, mirroring a deep understanding of how societies work, can consciously be designed to bring about possibilities for a political unified choral experience for all South Africans. This could include a study to investigate policy guidelines for prescribed music for school choirs and how the choice of repertoire could contribute to strengthening social cohesion. The social aspect of choral singing has been studied widely, but future research could investigate the impact of the choice of repertoire, including traditional cultural songs and composed and commissioned works, on establishing social cohesion through choral activities.

This study included choir conductors and adjudicators as research participants. Further studies could include other role players. Learners singing in choirs, parents and audience members can offer valuable insight into perceptions of, and potential contributions of choral singing to social cohesion. In this regards Griffin (2011:87) offers "some considerations for opportunities to involve learners as well as parents to reflect on in-and-out-of-school music experiences". Furthermore, the role of organisers of choir events in promoting social cohesion, or to employ strategies to achieve social inclusion goals, needs to be investigated.

In the worldwide experience of lockdown during the COVID 19 pandemic, the creative use of technology emerged. Some choirs continued to function notwithstanding the lack of social gathering. This paves the way for research on the role of technology in providing new forums for local or international virtual choir communities to interact and how technology counteracts/promotes social inclusion and cohesion.

The findings in this study open up issues with regard to teacher education, and more specifically, preparing future music teachers with specific skills and knowledge in choral education or leading collective singing activities. It is evident from the findings of this study that the average South African choral conductor is not adequately trained to meet the demands of competing with his/her choir on national level, let alone on international level. Research is needed to investigate tertiary institutions offering undergraduate programmes as well as further/continued education in choral education.

6.8 Conclusion in response to primary research question:

What can we learn from experiences of choral conductors and adjudicators on how school choir competitions contribute to social cohesion in a transforming South Africa?

At the end of this exciting research journey, the researcher has come to the realisation that choir competitions have a strong potency as springboard for social unity. The value of choral competitions as platform for enhancing nation-building in South Africa should not be underestimated. Choir participation should be embraced as a gateway to social cohesion. Literature shows that social cohesion is not easy to define and to explain. This proved especially difficult in this study, especially because the subject of the study

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was one that could be regarded as divisive. However, the findings show that school choir competitions in South Africa have a dual role. On the one hand, it is about winning and losing and on the other hand, it is about celebrating the heritage and sharing the diverse music which create excitement and following that demand yearly participation. Choir competitions in South Africa have a huge following from both learners and the community at large.

The two choir competitions have presented rich data that have proven the potency of choir competitions as a potential contributor to social cohesion. School choir competitions in South Africa are also platforms where formerly divided communities find opportunities to learn about each other by sharing each other's music and celebrating in the diverse heritage that they share.

From this study we can learn that choir competition is not only a platform for competitions and winning prizes. It is a confluence of cultures, musical heritages and interactions. Young people get an opportunity to meet with others from communities they have no knowledge about. Conductors get a chance to reflect on their current reality and consider what they should replace. This quest for continual change of old attitudes and belief systems into ones that embrace others is essential for transformative learning. Choir competitions are learning platforms that can contribute to society. It is a platform that can embrace young and old. Therefore, the results from this study confirm that school choir competitions can contribute to social cohesion in South African society.

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Addendum 1: List of South African choir competitions

Cantamus South African National Choir Festival & Competition, https://www.facebook.com/southcapemusicacademy

Cantus Choralis 2019 National Choir Competition, https://www.facebook.com/events/ho%C3%ABrskool-wonderboom/cantus-choralis-2019-national-choir-competition/323146058503561/

Ihlombe South African Choral Festival, https://www.classicalmovements.com/festival/ihlombe-south-african-choral-festival/

Old Mutual National Choir Festival, https://www.facebook.com/OMNCF/photos/?ref=page_internal

Philip H Moore: Ivumo Choir Festival, http://news.artsmart.co.za/2011/04/ivumo-national-choir-festival.html

Polmusca National Unity Festival (The annual Police Music and Cultural Association choir competition hosted by the South African Police Service), https://www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/msspeechdetail.php?nid=22916

Clash of the Choirs, https://www.facebook.com/ClashoftheChoirsSA/

Sing in Harmonie, https://www.facebook.com/Sing-in-Harmonie-673186959444174/

The ABC Motsepe National School Choir competition (hosted by the South African Department of Basic Education and formerly known as SASCE – The South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod), https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/ABCMotsepeSchoolsEisteddfod.aspx

ATKV-Applous National school choir competition (presented by an Afrikaans cultural organization), https://atkv.org.za/nuus/categories/atkv-applous/

Addendum 2: Interview schedule

Interview schedule

Social cohesion in school choir competitions:
The experiences of conductors and adjudicators

1. Give us your history of participation in choral music. You can start from our early stages and include your experiences as a singer, conductor and adjudicator?

2. In your view what has changed in choral music since the new South Africa. Are choirs now multi-racial, do they inspire unity amongst learners? Do you see choral music in all groups or is it mainly in black communities?

3. As a conductor when did you first include music of other cultures in your program, do you think including folk music brought some excitement and do children like it?

4. What are your challenges with choosing folk music in your choir? This means do you find it difficult to get music of other cultures for you programme?

5. What are or where your main challenges you face or faced as a conductor? How do you think children in your choir deal with change in democracy? What is your role in this as a conductor?

6. What is your view about the role of adjudicators in choral music and in their role can they inspire change in a democratic South Africa.

7. What is your view about how choral music can contribute in realising social cohesion?