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MINORITIES AND THE ZIMBABWEAN ARCHIVAL ENDEAVOUR

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Abstract

Societal archives are selective memory and the voices of the socio-political and economic elites abound in the archive at the expense of the other voices. This is so because of the nexus between political power and archives. In the case of the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), public sector records and archives predominate. Minorities and the underrepresented are evident by their “silences” and “absences” from the archive. Evidence from an interview, document analysis and review of related literature forms the thrust of this paper. The argument presented is that the appraisal and selection of records by NAZ needs to change as well as its collection development policy to incorporate private archives and related regional and local archives. Zimbabwe needs a transformational discourse as well as research agenda to facilitate the documentation of the underrepresented and minority groups from various sectors of society. Collaborative efforts by NAZ and groups of the marginalized should lay the foundation for achieving integrated societal memory, which will address the imbalances and discontents in the mainstream archival endeavour.

Keywords:

Archives, memory, minorities, underrepresented

Introduction

The emergence of postmodern archival discourse and theory coupled with the gaining of popularity of social history as a historiography has led to a rethinking about the archive and societal memory. Cook (2001) posited that the focus of postmodernism is to address the archive itself as a record, institution and function of societal memory. According to Ritchie et al., (2013:15), postmodernism refers to a family of theories, including post-structuralism (associated with Foucault, Lacan and Kristeva, among others) and deconstructionism (particularly associated with Derrida). Mainstream archives are increasingly seen as the main cause of silences and absences in the archive of the underrepresented and minorities. Discourse on the archive as selective memory has been dealt with by numerous scholars (Samuels 1986; Derrida 1995; Kaplan 2000; Harris 2000; Hamilton 2002; Jimerson 2003; White 2009; Ngulube 2012; Murambiwa 2012; Røsjø 2012; Rodrigues, Ngulube and Van De Walt 2014). Literature reviewed thus far is stuck at the level of acknowledging the imperative to archive many and varied voices but the reality is the exact opposite. The article notes that postmodernism and social history plus the concept of total archives have had more impact on the developed world, including South Africa to an extent. These are yet to be fully embraced to influence the archival enterprise in Zimbabwe and the rest of the continent.

This article explores how the Zimbabwean archival endeavour relates to the documentation of the underrepresented and minorities in Zimbabwe. It will suggest solutions for the Zimbabwean archival community and memory workers to establish strategies that will ensure that Zimbabwe has an integrated societal memory and mitigate against the silences and absences in societal memory. The UN (2012:6) states that one of the most widely cited definitions on minorities is that proposed by Special Rapporteur Francesco Capotorti in 1979, who defined a minority as “a

group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members-being nationals of the State-possesses ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.” This definition was then revisited in 1984, when Jules Deschenes defined a minority as “a group of citizens of a State, constituting a numerical minority and in a non-dominant position in the State, endowed with ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the majority of the population, having a sense of solidarity with one another, motivated, if only implicitly, by collective will to survive and whose aim is to achieve equality with the majority in fact and in law.” (UN 2012:6).

An appreciation of the documentation of minorities and the underrepresented needs to apprehend the evolution of archival endeavour in Zimbabwe, and it must be appreciated that archives are a direct product of the socio-economic, political and technological variables at play at any given time in history.

Evolution of archives in Zimbabwe

The National Archives of Zimbabwe is a legacy of colonialism, in particular British colonialism, and exhibits similar characteristics as other archives in the then British colonies in Africa. Tough (2003:2-3) affirms the developmental curve that the former British colonies took in as far as archival systems are concerned and points out that, “These countries have tended to develop similar administrative procedures. One of the shared administrative patterns was a ‘top-down’ insistence on thorough record keeping. Accountability for the use of money and equipment was a major concern.” Citing Mnjama (2003:91), Tough (2003:3) avers that:

Developments in Zimbabwe diverged significantly from the overall pattern. As Southern Rhodesia, the country was internally self-governing and therefore did not follow instructions circulated from London, nor did it employ the common cadre of expatriate colonial civil service officers. In the 1930s the settler administration decided to establish a national archive. This is in contrast to the lack of any such initiatives in the Colonial Office territories.

Tough (2003:3) posited that:

the Central African Archives developed into an outstanding centre of expertise in records management. Sophisticated systems for the management of records were developed in the 1940s and 1950s. The creation of the short-lived Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953 both gave a major impetus for the development of systems and ensured that they were transferred north of the Zambezi to modern day Malawi and Zambia (National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland 1963).

The background given so far is essential to contextualize the archiving of memory in Zimbabwe. It would not be possible without understanding how archives evolved in the country. Expounding this context, Murambiwa et al. (2012:12) characterizes the archives system in Zimbabwe as:

part of the apparatus of social rule and regulation (as) it facilitated the governance of the territory and population through accumulated information. From the colonial period through the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland till post independent Zimbabwe, the National Archives of Zimbabwe eventually became the centralising institution or agencies for official records —mandated to facilitate the proper management of public records so that the information contained in them remains accessible.

Of importance to note is the fact that emphasis was placed on “public” records which have been alluded to earlier, that they would be required for administrative purposes as well as for historical reconstruction - a typical scenario throughout the whole of Anglophone Africa.

The archiving of social memory in Zimbabwe cannot be fully understood without apprehending the legal context which governs archival work in Zimbabwe. Baxter (1963:3) in Murambiwa et al. (2012) argues that a “description of the legislative background is essential to an understanding of the place and work of the national archives”, whilst Parer (2001) in Murambiwa et al. (2012:2) pointed out that, “it provides the essential framework that enables a national records and archives service to operate with authority in its dealings with agencies of the state. The National Archives could not command authority in the archival field without it being underpinned by enabling legislation.”

Murambiwa et al. (2012:14) identified four legislative phases that guided archival practice in Zimbabwe from inception to present. These are the 1935 Archives Act, the National Archives Act of 1958, and the 1964 National Archives Act and finally the 1986 National Archives of Zimbabwe Act, amended in 2001, and took effect in 2002. The first period, 1890-1953 is described as characterized by the:

custodial approach and philosophy informing the management of archives focused on a latent regime of access to those records selected for permanent preservation. An obvious preference was for those records and selected archives that had matters incidental to the administration of the colonial territory and historical manuscripts of the settlers of the Pioneer Column.... this had an important effect on the historical narrative of the country under the settler rule. The fact that records and archives of prominent settler companies such as the BSAC could still be destroyed, or stolen, or purchased and even relocated to Britain, made the custodial approach more feasible to the settler government. The Archives Act (1935) enabled the National Archives to intentionally manage the archives of less powerful groups, notably involving African affairs so that they could also be—moved and re-established within the territory of the powerful settler government (Murambiwa et al. 2012:14).

The second period, 1953-1963 continued the custodial approach but was greatly influenced by American archival thinking and practice. One critical aspect of archival management was the fact that the Central African Archives was financed from taxes of the white settler community who believed that the primary role of the archives was as a memorial to their predecessors and themselves Tough (2009). According to Murambiwa et al. (2012:16):

this obviously, neglected the historical narratives of the African people as their investment in the history of Rhodesia was overshadowed by the colonial administration at the time. Hence the few records and archives of the Africans were only scarcely documented in contrast to that of the white Southern Rhodesian settlers.

The third period, 1963-1980 continued the custodial approach and the influence of American philosophy and practice in records and archives management in Zimbabwe and this period also saw the integration of the lifecycle approach to records management in public sector records management. The post 1980 period has only seen an amendment on fees structures, however, in as far as archival practice is concerned the custodial and lifecycle approach predominate whilst the registry system characterises records management in Zimbabwe (Murambiwa et al. 2012). In terms of its character archiving in Zimbabwe like its equivalent records management is aptly described by Ngulube (2012:35) as:

The process of shaping and structuring the archives was influenced by the dominant colonial ideology that marginalised certain groups of people. The archive and the

archivists secured and maintained the position of the colonisers of Zimbabwe. Thus, the archives and archivists mainly preserved the dominant colonial narratives, voices and interpretations. That had the effect of promoting certain social and political stereotypes as historical fact because they were legitimised by the archive. Archival traces of the ordinary person were limited. Let alone the archival traces of the indigenous people. Indigenous people can never imagine constructing their family histories from the archives as such records do not exist. The records were not created by the indigenous people. The indigenous communities appear in the colonial archive in the context of their relations with the state. They feature in statistics, crime reports, census reports and patients case sheets, for instance. In most cases the official records do reflect the real life and experiences of the marginalised.

It is important to note that the archiving of Historical Manuscripts was actually the harbinger of an archival system in Zimbabwe. Ngulube (2012:36) points out that:

the primary orientation of archival work during the first era of archival management in Zimbabwe was to accession, arrange, describe and preserve the archives of the British South Africa Company (BSAC). This emphasis was not surprising because the National Archives grew out of the efforts of the Historical Society's desire to preserve the documentary heritage of the BSAC in the wake of Responsible Government in the then Southern Rhodesia.

It is not surprising that he (Ngulube) further avers that the colonial archive under-documented certain groups (Africans) which is not unique given that this has happened even in countries such as the United States of America, Canada and Australia. In concluding his article on total archives Ngulube (2012:33) posits that archival development in Zimbabwe between 1935 and 1980, does not mirror comprehensively Zimbabwe's past because it does not have a bearing on the history of Zimbabweans, because it is biased and distorted at best it a fractured archive. He describes the Zimbabwean archive as "a massive repository of correspondence and communications between colonial bureaucrats, and not a repository representative of the entirety of Zimbabwean history and heritage." Manungo (2012:65) concurs with the above and noted that, "the focus and interest of the National Archives was the preservation of the early records and documents of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) and other personal records, manuscripts and photographs of the pioneers."

Ngulube (2012) however, notes that the 1980's saw efforts at "safeguarding against collective amnesia" but he asks the fundamental question is it possible to preserve all records of all people for all people? He acknowledges that the resources and space are not there to live up to that responsibility. As a solution he suggests an archival system in which the National Archives would coordinate a national archival management system that shares the responsibility of preserving archives with the creators of records for their own benefit and the benefit of society. This needs to be established after a needs analysis of the locals and should be in line with the post custodial notion of managing archives. As alluded to before Ngulube (2012) toys with the concept of total archives and he posits that it hinges on the postmodernist dictum and postcolonial thinking. On the other hand, indigenous knowledge systems provide archivists with a window of opportunity to reconceptualise the archival enterprise and "change not simply the archiving process, but what is archivable...the possibility of archiving." he ends by citing Derrida (1996).

Minority

A minority is "a subordinate group whose members has significant less control or power over their lives than members of a dominant or majority group" (Schaefer 1993). Minorities are interchangeable with subordinate groups and are a group that experiences a narrowing of

opportunities (success, education, wealth etc.) that is disproportionately low compared to their numbers in society. The European Agency on Reconstruction, EAR (2006:13) acknowledged that further complications arise when one differentiates between national and ethnic minorities. It defines a national minority as “a group within one state that has a kin-state (for example, Croats in Serbia or Russians in Ukraine), whilst an ethnic minority is “a group which may or may not have a kin-state (for example, Roma or Serbs). The above can cause problems for ethnic groups without a kin-state, such as the Ashkalija, which are often grouped with Roma or conversely with Egyptians, who have a kin-state, but which does not act in defense of their rights. This differentiation is often overlooked in the application of legal mechanisms for the protection of national minorities.

Schaefer (1993) listed five major characteristics of a minority group: firstly, they have distinguishing physical or cultural traits, for example, skin colour or language; secondly, they suffer unequal treatment and have less power over their lives; thirdly, they have involuntary membership in the group (no personal choice); fourthly, they have an awareness of subordination and a strong sense of group solidarity; and lastly, they experience high in-group marriages. In Zimbabwe, minorities are found both as in the racial and ethnic categories in the White Zimbabweans as well as tribal minorities in the Black Zimbabwean population.

Schaefer (1993) categorises minorities into four namely: Racial; as groups who are classified according to obvious physical characteristics for example, skin colour, and uses the case of America as an example where racial minorities include, Blacks, American Indians, Asian Americans and Hawaiians. Ethnic; these are groups differentiated on the basis of culture such as language or food. In the United States these comprise of Hispanics or Latinos such as Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Jews are also considered cultural minorities instead of religious minorities. Racial groups can also have distinctive cultural traditions and ethnic minorities can either be Black or White so that a person can be both Black and Hispanic. Gender; males are a social majority, women demonstrate four out of the five characteristics of a minority status and in this category there are no in-group marriages. Lastly, Religion; these are groups that have a religion other than the dominant faith. In the United States religious minorities include Muslims, the Amish, Mormons and Catholics.

The archival endeavour and minorities in Zimbabwe

In an informal interview with the Director of the National Archives of Zimbabwe, Mr. I. Murambiwa (2014) he pointed out that the archiving of Historical Manuscripts (HM) in Zimbabwe goes back to the collecting efforts that began with the Historical Exhibition of 1933 by V. W. Hiller, which was to commemorate the 40 years of the colonization of Rhodesia. As alluded to earlier the archives were collected for both administrative and historical reasons. In as far as collection development was concerned Historical Manuscripts have always been covered by statute. Since 1935, the Director or the Minister could declare certain records historical and prevent their destruction or disposal without authority. This is covered by Section 12 of the NAZ Act of 1986. He goes further and states that although the custodial approach and the registry system puts much emphasis on “public” records the concept of total archives is something that has always been practiced in Zimbabwe in spite of the challenges that have been experienced before in implementing it fully due to lack of resources (human and capital).

Murambiwa (2014) points out that the archiving of HM in Zimbabwe can best be described in terms of three processes of the archival endeavour. Firstly, acquisition of HM is attained through statute, that is through declaration as a historical record as mandated by Section 12 of the NAZ Act of 1986, at the same time donations, purchase and bequests have been utilized since the

inception of archival services in 1935. The second archival activity applied to HM at the NAZ is preservation and maintenance of HM; here the same strategies that apply to public archives are applied without distinction between “public” and “private” records. Archival arrangement and description does not utilize library methodologies as experienced by the researcher when he arranged and described HM during his tenure as an Archivist with NAZ, instead, the archival principles of respect des fonds and original order are observed as in the case of “public” archives. Even in terms of housing these HM are housed in a separate section from public archives but as archives and not in the library section of the NAZ. It is important to note that generally these manuscripts have tended to be non-digital in format.

Lastly, in terms of Access or Reference services, Murambiwa (2014) points out that currently to access HM users of the archives have to physically visit the two repositories in Harare and Bulawayo respectively. However, efforts are currently underway to ensure that the NAZ, adopts and utilizes the new technologies that will render remote access possible.

In discussing the documentation of minorities, this article adapted the 4 of the 7 questions that Røsjø (2004) had for her article on minority documentation in Norway with special emphasis on immigrants. Røsjø (2004) posed the following questions: What do public and private archives, respectively, document? Which voices can be found in these public records from new minorities? Which perspective does the government have on minorities? What do private archives document about minorities? What kind of image do we create if we only collect and preserve the public archives? Which conclusions can we draw concerning the archive's outreach work and will the users of the archives be able to search for information relevant to their own identity? The author posed the following questions to NAZ adapted from the above: What does NAZ document? Which voices can be found in these public records from minorities and the underrepresented? What perspective does Government have on minorities and the underrepresented in terms of documentation? What does NAZ document about minorities and the underrepresented?

For the first question NAZ pointed out that through its oral history unit, it identifies gaps in history and fills these gaps through oral interviews which are captured in both audio and visual formats, transcribed into texts and also translated into English and other vernacular languages. NAZ documents the history of the nation, its cultural heritage and values of a nation towards a total archive that is not biased and selective.

On the second question NAZ, states that it depends on one's definition of minorities. Under minorities NAZ has the Project One Nation, One Zimbabwe, which captures the culture and practices of the undocumented or under documented tribes. So far the project has managed to document the Kalanga of Bulilima and Mangwe Districts of Matabeleland South, the Ndau of Chipinge, the BaTonga of Matabeleland North, and the Tsonga of Chiredzi. The Nambya have been covered slightly but the thrust was on sacred places of Hwange and Chief Mabhikwa and Chief Dingani Nelukova areas were the sampled ones. On the underrepresented the Project Capturing a Fading National Memory, has tried to capture the voices of all who participated in the liberation struggle that led to the independence of Zimbabwe, from the *Mujibbas*, the *Chimbwidos*, (male and female war collaborators respectively) War Veterans (ex-combatants), ex political detainees, and politicians. According to NAZ the project has been successful in capturing the underrepresented in history.

In response to the third question NAZ states that the Government of Zimbabwe supports the documentation of minorities and the underrepresented, that is why it funds the above two documentation projects. The Government through its arms like the National Archives and the

National Museum and Monuments are fully behind the documentation of such areas of history. The project Capturing a Fading National Memory had been put on hold due to lack of resources, but in 2014 the Government resuscitated the project by funding for the documentation of the liberation heritage of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) the armed wing of Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) before independence. This illustrates the fact that government has a positive attitude and thinking towards the documentation of minorities and the underrepresented.

As for the fourth question NAZ states that it documents the general background of the informant(s), their culture, beliefs, norms, values, intangible cultural heritage, birth rites, and initiation ceremonies if any. Chieftainships, coronation ceremonies, family trees, totems, burial rites, rain making ceremonies, taboos to mention but a few are also documented as part of the memory of minorities and the underrepresented.

Although the above is commendable efforts at documenting minorities and the underrepresented it must be borne in mind that the country has faced numerous challenges in the last decade and half which have impacted negatively on the operations of NAZ. Ngulube (2012) concludes that there has been "limited excellence" in archiving. The NAZ, as the national institution has not been able to document all sections of the society nor has it been able to take up the role of provincial, regional or local archives. Although the archiving of memory in Zimbabwe might resemble a concept of the "total" archives, it is but a very crude form from the way the Canadians have conceptualized and operationalised it. In fact, the central role of the NAZ has actually left huge gaps in societal memory.

This is exemplified by the challenges that have characterized archiving in the colonial and post-colonial era. Discourse on the state of archives in Africa and in particular Zimbabwe, tends to focus on the challenges and the opportunities that exist, this discourse paints a bleak picture inherited from the former Colonial Administrations, and continued by the successor states, Mnjama (2010:126), Tough (2009), citing Musembi (1988) and Thurston (1998). Some of the challenges range from inadequate funding, lack of recognition by national governments of the role that archives play, poor storage facilities, poor arrangement and description standards, inadequate retrieval systems, lack of professional staff and understaffing, and migrated archives to mention just but a few.

Ngulube (2012) avers that the major challenges that undermine the holistic archiving of societal memory since 1935 are; lack of funding from government between 2002-2010, brain drain and skills flight caused by poor work conditions and retention schemes for experienced and qualified archivists, technological pressures, lack of a comprehensive acquisition strategy, inadequate systematic arrangements to repatriate migrated archives or disputed claims, dependence on archival methods developed in the west, limited number of historical societies and professional associations in existence in Zimbabwe, proliferation of e-records created and stored in an ever evolving variety of formats, failure to expeditiously repatriate or copy records of the colonial period housed in London and the records of the Smith regime deposited in South Africa, (to note that NAZ did repatriate some of these Records from South Africa, but evidence on Rhodesian websites and forums indicates possession of records whose provenance was Rhodesia) and the deafening silence about the role of the archivist and archives in a fast changing society.

Drawing parallels to the situation in South Africa the study by Rodrigues (2013:132) found out that:

these developments often deal with the past from the theoretical perspective of post-colonialism, focusing on attempts to establish historical truth and collective memory for

groups or communities who have often been marginalised and excluded from dominant accounts of history in the context of a colonial framework.

Similarly, Isaacman, Lalu and Nygren (2005:55-57) in Rodrigues (2013) point out that the effort is to counter balance colonialism and question the colonial archive in its tenets, they however, see the colonial archive as “a unique opportunity to begin the process of constructing a new archive with interpretive possibilities different from those offered by existing collections, especially official ones”.

Rodrigues (2013) avers, that efforts to document the under-documented in Africa – especially those not related to non-traditional archival objects such as oral history, and those not associated with political liberation struggles – are minimal. Citing Tough (2009:187-188), he posits that recent international archival discourses, such as postmodernism, and the transformation debates generated in post-apartheid South Africa have not yet been wholly recognised in the rest of Africa, and may not fully “... ‘fit’ with the experiences of countries north of the Limpopo”.

Ngulube (2012:27) concurs with the findings by Rodrigues (2013) in the case of Zimbabwe, he notes that the lack of specific, clear and focused collection policies results in the absence of a complete record of the past. He posits that “in fact, projects to document the underrepresented are non-existent. It is left to the oral historian to give the undocumented a voice in the archive.” Ngulube argues further that “archivists cannot be proactive in seeking materials on undocumented areas as result of a lack of an acquisition policy. It is only by having such policies that we may build a “total archive” ...in his analysis of the oral history project Ngulube (2012:28) notes that collecting oral history was one of the strategies used to fill gaps in the Zimbabwean archive. He concedes that there was limited excellence in archiving in the oral history project. “the tendency of the oral historian was to concentrate on the elite” those considered to have contributed to Zimbabwean history were interviewed. Some of the factors that undermine the preservation of holistic archives are numerated by Ngulube (2012). On the same note Manungo (2012:64) concurs with Ngulube’s (2012) observation and states that it focused initially on prominent Europeans and then in the 70’s on prominent Africans.

In conclusion, the literature reviewed reflects that locally national archival institutions are yet to develop capacity for documenting the underrepresented. Kaplan (2000) observed that and posits that Jewish and afro American communities opted to set up their own archives instead of relying on archival institutions to document their voices. Equally true in Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, statutes tend to create an enabling environment, the challenge has been a continuation of the metanarratives that exclude other voices and experiences from the archive. This is the case with the oral history projects in Zimbabwe that tended to focus on the elites of the black population whilst side-lining the various minorities, in fact the efforts so far have been minimal. The observation that it has been minimal is premised on the fact that the project was supposed to document memories from the ten administrative provinces of Zimbabwe. A decade later after its official launch in 2004 only 4 districts (Gokwe, Chiredzi and Bulilima and Mangwe) out of 63 in the country have been documented. However, it is interesting to note that the Gays and Lesbian Association of Zimbabwe (GALZ) has been depositing its newsletter with the NAZ, as part of the requirements of the Publications Act of 1974. This is not the effort of the NAZ nor the GALZ actively documenting gays and lesbians but mere observance of the statute, and ironically in a country renowned for its homophobia, gays and lesbians are being represented in the post-colonial archive.

The GALZ newsletter is deposited with the library of the NAZ and library techniques and methodologies apply in the management of the material. On the other hand, South Africa has made commendable progress, and this can be attributed to post-apartheid transformational

discourse and the impact of social history and postmodernism on the South African archival enterprise. Ngulube (2012) and Rodrigues (2013) posit that the focus on oral history projects and liberation, movement's records is not enough to document the underrepresented given that this comprises many and varied groups like, women, the disabled, minorities, immigrants, gays and lesbians, and the transgendered. Given the challenges faced by NAZ enumerated in this article, it is imperative to note that although the impact has been minimal, the efforts are commendable and in the right direction.

The challenges faced by national archival institutions in particular limited resources make it difficult for national repositories to implement holistic archives. This is equally true of community archives and local initiatives that lack resources and capacity (technical expertise) to set up their own archives as in the cases that Kaplan (2000) refers to in the USA. Unfortunately, the same does not obtain regionally, as such collaboration could be the way forward for the local initiatives and the national institutions. Unlike in the developed world where universities and their libraries actively provide an alternative to national or community archives, most universities in Africa are state owned and funded, as such they suffer from the same resource based diseases that most public funded institutions like national archives suffer from.

At the same time as alluded to earlier, the concepts, theories and strategies utilised in representing the underrepresented are many, varied and randomised as a result of the specific socio-economic, cultural, political and technological realities prevailing in a given society at a given time.

Of interest to note is the fact that these principles, concepts and strategies are Eurocentric and not home grown initiatives which resonates with Ngulube's (2012) call for African conceptualisations that reflect the local prevailing realities in the region. This article would argue that in the absence of local solutions to creating a "holistic archive" African archivists could still learn from their counterparts globally and adopt and adapt those elements that are in sync with the realities that are faced by people of the region. At the same time one would extend this to the archival training of archivists in Africa, where the curriculum does not meet the challenges and expectations of the African socio-economic, cultural, political and technological realities, which from a postmodernist view are many and varied as the underrepresented themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploratory literature review on the archiving of memories of the underrepresented and communities brought into perspective, a reflection how mainstream archives, choose to 'forget' minority groups. The above could not be discussed fully without appreciating the major theoretical formulations and conceptualisations that have impacted on archival theory and practice globally, regionally and locally.

The article highlighted and discussed what constitutes societal memory and how it is archived in Zimbabwe. It also discussed what minorities are and in both instances it was found that there is no consensus on what constitutes each concept. In reviewing literature on archiving the underrepresented globally this article relied on postmodern archival theory, social history and the concept of total archives to understand how these efforts were conceived and implemented. Further expounding evidence from the interview and document analysis showed that Zimbabwe lags behind in the efforts at representing the underrepresented even though the efforts are commendable. The findings also point to a dearth of initiatives at both the mainstream archival institutions and local or activist initiatives particularly in Zimbabwe.

The focus tends to be on oral history projects with little or minimal success. To compound it all is the fact that these concepts, theories and strategies are all foreign to the majority of the underrepresented and there is need for redress. Literature also points to the fact that globally there is consensus that the new imperative needs to be strengthened and more should be done to document the many and varied voices. At the same time, it has become evident that there is a knowledge gap between Zimbabwe and the rest of the world hence the need to research into these thematic issues. However, this article would like to aver that although the efforts are minimal globally there is need to appreciate the efforts so far and to find solutions that will enhance the new archival imperative.

Some of the solutions lie in the areas for future research as suggested by White (2009), which consist of the following:

- i. Conceptual expansion of the term record and archive (kinetic, oral and aural),
- ii. Embeddedness, locating field experiences within communities,
- iii. Collaboration,
- iv. Leadership, activism and ethics,
- v. Reflexivity, and
- vi. Sustainability which considers sensitive planning to community realities.

In conclusion, this article highlights the broad role of archives in society and the corresponding variables that determine representation in the archive for posterity. The issues discussed are critical to the many and varied underrepresented groups globally, regionally and locally. The efforts currently underway are a positive sign that the archival enterprise has begun to take corrective measures in creating holistic archives for the people by the people in contrast to the metanarratives of the big men/women and politics that has characterised the archival enterprise for millennia.

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