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UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES: INCLUDING THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORIOGRAPHY AND ARCHIVAL HERITAGE

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Abstract

This research article emanates from a doctoral study which investigated the potential inclusion of the records generated by South African Portuguese community-based organisations into a workable archival collecting initiative of the community. The specific purpose of this article is to report on the current status of underrepresentation of the Portuguese community in South Africa's contemporary social historiography and the community's interrelated underrepresentation in the country's archival heritage. Based on the situation outlined, the article goes on to advocate for the need to broaden representation by incorporating the records generated by local Portuguese community-based organisations into the archival heritage of South Africa.

Keywords: Under-documented communities, social history, community archiving, immigrant archives, archives management, records management, South African-Portuguese community

Introduction

South African institutions of preservation, such as archives, have often focused their collecting efforts on records of national significance and on documenting the perspectives of the more dominant communities that represent power and government. This has resulted in the underrepresentation of certain communities in the archival heritage of the nation, such as the Portuguese community in South Africa (Caswell and Mallick 2014; Cook, 2013; Glaser 2010; Harris 2002; Thorpe and Byrne, 2016). Flinn (2007:152) goes on to explain that broadening participation by including communities that have been underrepresented in a nation's archival heritage is imperative, and that it is in the interests not only of the particular group concerned, but of all. He elaborates by stating that the history of these communities "... is not only important for those groups, but impact on all our stories, and together they make up an inclusive national heritage, our national histories".

The purpose of this article

This research article is based on a doctoral study (Rodrigues 2013) which used a generic interpretive qualitative research design to investigate the potential inclusion of the records generated by South Africa's Portuguese community-based organisations into a feasible archival collecting programme for the community. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to report on the current status of underrepresentation of the Portuguese community in South Africa's contemporary written history and the community's related underrepresentation in the country's archival heritage. Based on the situation outlined, the article goes on to advocate for the need to broaden representation by

incorporating the records generated by Portuguese community-based organisations into the archival heritage of South Africa.

Background to the study

In society, individuals, groups and organisations make and keep records that serve as evidence and memory of their activities. While records, recordkeeping and archiving may take many forms, decisions on which records are kept relate to prevailing ideas about their usefulness and continuing worth to individuals, groups and society in general, often linked to those who have the power to make these decisions. In this context, "societies institutionalise their collective archives according to their own evidence and memory paradigms. These paradigms influence what is remembered and what is forgotten, what is preserved and what is destroyed, how archival knowledge is defined, what forms archives take, how archives are described and indexed, and who have ownership, custodial and access rights relating to them" (McKemmish, Gilliland-Swetland and Ketelaar 2005:146).

Shilton and Srinivasan (2007:88) further explain that, throughout history, the "power to represent" and record societies' experiences has been held by heritage and preservation institutions such as archives, and the manifestations of this power have helped to build societies' perceptions of their past, their cultures and memories. However, although the overarching purpose of these institutions is to preserve records that are representative of all spheres of human activity, they have often ignored experiences outside the history of the state and the powerful, consequently creating gaps in the portrayal of a society's past experiences and social memory.

In the early 1970s, American archivists such as Howard Zinn, and European archivists such as Hans Boom made archivists aware of the fact that they should focus collection development work not only on the elites of society, but on documenting the lives of 'ordinary people'. According to Keough (2002:242-243) these archivists argued that archival repositories lacked significant documentation on, amongst others, women, minority groups, and immigrant communities, and that a more balanced historical record needed to be pursued. Within this context, concepts and practices such as the 'total archives', 'community archiving', and 'participatory archiving and appraisal' began to be advocated, requiring archivists to consider including the lives of these ordinary people and members of underrepresented social groups.

More recently, this led to the International Council on Archives – in its *Universal Declaration on Archives* (International Council on Archives 2010) – recognising that archives play an essential role in the preservation of collective social memory, and that there is a diversity of archives and a need to record every area of human activity. However, even though there have been calls for a more inclusive archives internationally, and there are collecting initiatives working towards that goal, to date this reorientation has not been comprehensive, and has gained little real support worldwide. Consequently many mainstream archives still focus their collecting approaches on records of 'national significance' or those representing power and government. Cook (2000:169-181) supports this by criticising the continued approach of archives that privileges official documentation of the state over that of individuals or private organisations and communities. Singer (1997:26) adds that those archives that do attempt to include the documents of underrepresented communities are often the result of the vision of only a few members of the specific group who recognise the importance of preserving the information and the history about themselves.

Supporting the rationale for the inclusion of the underrepresented in the archives

In recent decades two interrelated schools of thought, postmodernism and social history, have presented the archives profession with a theoretical paradigm that supports the rationale for collecting the records of communities that have been underrepresented in archival and other heritage institutions. Discourses on postmodernism are most often seen in philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Jean Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. Simply put, these philosophers reject the idea of objective truth and a singular historical narrative. In this context, postmodernism is concerned with plurality, differences, skepticism and textualisation. It is often seen as a reaction to modernism, where objectivity, certainty and unity were underpinning views. In his investigation of the possible impact of the postmodern philosophy on archival discourse Cook (2001:17) explains that a postmodern archival discourse takes for granted that records are no longer documents of complete truth, but rather products which originate within a specific context. This shift from absolute truth to subjective memory is an important one if we want the institutions of preservation that house our memories to reflect more accurately all components of the complex societies they supposedly serve (Cook, 2001:18). Given the responsibility of preserving a comprehensive documentary heritage of society, archival institutions therefore have as their duty to consider the views of postmodernism, particularly those that are relevant to archival practice.

Born in the 1960s, and associated with postmodernism, social history deals with ordinary people rather than the elite. It therefore includes the history of ordinary people and their experiences of coping with everyday life. Mayer (1985:388), finding social history an important research trend that required a response from the archival community, advised changes to various aspects of archival management in order to keep up with research in the then emerging discipline. Regarding appraisal and acquisition, he explained that, while archives often had collected the documents of prominent members of society and mainstream organisations, particular effort should be made to preserve those less available records which document the experiences of black people, ordinary women, immigrant families, amongst others.

Various trends, principles and practices have emerged in the archival field, influenced by these two schools of thought. These include the concept of the 'total archives', the appraisal strategy of documentation planning, ethnic provenance, documenting underrepresented social groups and community archiving (Keough 2002; McDonald 2008; Ola and Adegbore 2015). Although these principles and practices have at times been seen as ideals that are not entirely achievable by some critics, they still offer archivists a direction in which they should strive. Van Wingen and Bass (2008:575), also argue that, in the light of postmodernism and the new social history, which is a 'history from the bottom up', archival practices regarding what records should be collected, has shifted to include the archives of ordinary people, and 'neglected voices', such as smaller social groups identified by gender, race, ethnicity and class differences.

Rationalising the need for preserving the history of the South African Portuguese community

According to the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, Act 19 of 2002 (South Africa, 2002:2), provided for by the Constitution, the "South African nation consists of a diversity of cultural, religious and linguistic communities". Also, according to the Constitution (South Africa 1996a), sections, 6, 9, 29, 30, 31, 35, 185 and 186, and the Commission (Act 19, 2002), all communities should be treated equally in

South Africa, and the cultures of all communities need to be promoted and protected. The Commission emphasises the importance of all South Africans promoting respect for the cultures, religions and languages of each other "… so as to promote peace, friendship, humanity and tolerance among communities" (Rautenbach and Malherbe 1998:58). It also notes that the understanding of these diverse cultures can assist in promoting national unity amongst communities and nation building.

The above statutory mandate has many possible ramifications. Amongst these is the importance of having knowledge of our diverse past, in order to gain an understanding of what South Africa is today. An understanding of each other, and how all South Africans have contributed and still contribute towards a South African identity and experience is imperative, and can only be achieved, inter alia, through an understanding of our multiple, yet uniquely South African heritages and histories. As a means to accomplish this, the records of the diverse communities that constitute South African society need to be collected, managed and made available, including the archival records that capture the experiences of the many national, ethnic and immigrant communities of South Africa, such as the Portuguese community.

However, despite the fact that the Portuguese are the third largest European community in South Africa, and although they have been an integral part of contemporary South African society since the early twentieth century, minimal literature and materials on the modern-day community are available for research (Glaser 2010; McDuling 1995). In the same vein, Glaser (2010:61) points out that South Africans of Portuguese descent are a remarkably under-researched population, referring to this phenomenon as a 'large historiographical gap'. Glaser (2010) goes on to explain that studies on an immigrant group such as the Portuguese community do not only provide a contribution to that group, but may contribute towards immigrant and social studies in general. These studies may include analysis of these groups, their arrivals, their adaptation and contribution to their host country, their home life, and the social, economic and political problems they faced.

These studies may also give insight into the development of the country's legal and social attitudes, such as xenophobia and tolerance, towards immigrant and other minority groups. They could complement comparative studies especially in South Africa, that reflect host population attitudes towards different types of immigrant communities, for example, black as opposed to white immigrants, Catholic, protestant and other religious, linguistic and ethnic groups.

Lastly, Pereira (2000:31), points out that the Portuguese community are part of South Africa's history in many ways and have a long-standing presence here, with the arrival of large numbers of Portuguese immigrants from the early twentieth century. Therefore, strategies and solutions need to be found to safeguard any potential archival materials that reflect the history of this community in South Africa.

Modern-day immigration of the Portuguese to South Africa

The presence of the Portuguese in South Africa has been a reality since the end of the 15th century (Leal, 1977:1). There were different reasons and conditions for the arrival and presence of the Portuguese to this country. Portuguese sailors were the first Europeans to have contact with the inhabitants of the Cape. Since then their presence here has been uninterrupted. However, Portuguese people only arrived in South Africa in large numbers from the 1920s onwards.

Between the two world wars, many Portuguese settled in and around Johannesburg. The largest influx, however, was from the 1950s. H F Verwoerd's plans for more whites in South Africa focused on Anglo-Saxon protestants in Europe, but the desired numbers did not come to South Africa. The focus then shifted to what was then considered to be less desirable immigrants from Mediterranean countries (Pereira, 2000:34).

A large number of these immigrants came from the Portuguese Island of Madeira. According to Leal (1977:41) the main reason for these immigrants' coming to South Africa was economic. These immigrants were mostly peasants and labourers and often had a poor level of formal education. Many entered the country illegally as they did not comply with the then Act 22 of 1913, which stipulated that immigrants had to know how to read and write a European language. Due to their farming or rural background, many were illiterate. For these largely unskilled Madeirans, legal immigration was highly restrictive throughout the period from the 1930s to the 1970s. Only about 14000 of the approximately 108000 official Portuguese immigrants between 1940 and 1981 were from Madeira.

It was in this context that illegal entry became a central part of the Madeiran immigrant experience in South Africa (Glaser 2010:67). Numerous Portuguese, mostly of Madeiran origin, crossed into South Africa illegally in Cape Town or went on to Lourenco Marques and were smuggled across the border. Important to note as well, is that Madeiran immigrants, though classified white and entitled to the benefits of 'whiteness', were often darker skinned and occupied a space on the margins of white South Africa until well into the late 1970s (Glaser 2010:68). This is also highlighted by da Silva (2005) who, in his study of the Portuguese community in South Africa, mentions that often Madeirans lived in a 'paradox' benefitting from their racial classification status but at the same time often being resented by the local populace.

Glaser goes on to say that like black migrant workers, they were vulnerable to deportation and lacked a sense of security or permanence. Even legal immigrants were relatively slow to seek formal citizenship. Communities were inwardly focused, spoke Portuguese among themselves, lived in insular 'ghettos' and clustered around local Catholic churches (Glaser 2010:68). Glaser does however acknowledge that the experiences of the second and third generation Madeirans have changed significantly, since they have become better educated, are often financially secure and substantially more integrated into South African society as a whole.

Another wave of Portuguese immigration that can be distinguished during the 20th century is that of the Portuguese who came from the mainland of Portugal between 1963 and 1971 (Glaser 2010:69). Mainland Portugal in the 1960s was experiencing economic difficulties, with high unemployment rates especially outside the bigger towns and cities. South Africa's economy, on the other hand, was booming, and whites with skills had a range of opportunities. However, although the Portuguese who came from mainland Portugal had a higher level of education and skills than the Madeirans, they were still more likely to be artisans.

Like the Madeirans, these newer Portuguese immigrants tended to cluster in particular neighbourhoods, the majority in the south of Johannesburg where housing was relatively cheap. Such a large number of Portuguese were drawn to these southern suburbs such as Rosettenville, Troyville and La Rochelle, that they became known as 'little Lisbon' or 'little Portugal'. Often in these suburbs Portuguese residents could get by speaking only Portuguese (Glaser 2010:70).

The final significant wave of immigration took place after Angola and Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in the 1970s. There was a large influx of Portuguese people into South Africa during and after this period. Estimates were that about 250000 Portuguese left Mozambique after 1974, either going back to Portugal or immigrating to South Africa. Leal (1977:40) notes that, unlike the economic motives for Madeiran emigration, the reasons for the Portuguese Mozambican emigration phenomenon at the time were the political changes taking place there. The South African government, which was sympathetic to refugees 'fleeing black rule', set up camps to absorb them. Local Portuguese organisations also assisted in their arrival and integration (Glaser 2010:72).

Da Rosa and Trigo (1986) suggest that, after the initial trauma of transition, this more educated wave of immigrants moved into the upper levels of South Africa Portuguese society and helped change the image of the local Portuguese away from the farming, 'shopkeeper' and small trader stereotype. These immigrants often had a higher degree of education and professional skills than their Madeiran, and even their mainland, counterparts. As a result of this, many found jobs easily and were quickly absorbed into business and industry (Pereira 2000:40). Glaser (2010:72) notes that, by the mid 1980s, this third wave had settled down and had become relatively prosperous.

The Portuguese community today

The number of Portuguese in South Africa increased dramatically, from an estimated 10 000 in the 1950s to an estimated half a million in the late seventies and eighties (Pina, 2001; Van Graan, 1988:45; and Webb, 1999). Glaser (2010:74) points out that the Portuguese community in South Africa today is quite different from what it originally was. Up to the 1970s, the Madeirans and the mainlanders formed quite distinct communities. Madeirans lived in their own distinct neighbourhoods and within their own social networks. As Madeirans were generally less educated and had lower incomes, they were often looked down upon by the mainlanders. Although there were over-arching Portuguese associations in major towns and cities, there were also many regionally defined Portuguese associations and social clubs.

However, in spite of these regional – often linked to class – differences, there were many forces drawing Portuguese South Africans together. Language was probably foremost among them. McDuling's (1995) and Pereira's (2000) suggest that other factors contributing to a more 'unified' Portuguese community may have been the local community media, such as the community newspaper *O Seculo*, and community radio and television stations. Since these community media targeted the Portuguese community as a whole they may have eased inter-Portuguese communication and promoted a common sense of connection and identity.

Glaser (2010:75) also suggests that Catholic churches drew Portuguese South Africans together across social divides and regional lines. "Aside from the actual services, many of which were conducted in Portuguese, church social events and charity work drew people of different backgrounds together. Although the church might have played a role in linking the community to other Catholic groups in South Africa, the reality appears to be that it has played a vital role in forging, and maintaining, a communal identity." Portuguese clubs and organisations that proliferated in the 1960s may also have been a contributing factor. At these, while football, and later roller hockey, were the main events, they were equally important in attracting Portuguese of diverse backgrounds to social gatherings, community functions and community weddings (Glaser 2010:75).

Webb (1999:45) also notes that, although the Portuguese community has experienced widespread integration into South African society from the 1980s and onwards, at the same time a fair degree of group identification is still present today. He explains that this sense of identity has been forged, inter alia, in a common historical experience, the struggle of early immigrants to establish themselves, a common language and a common faith. Pereira (2000:41) also notes that, although the early rejection by some whites of the Portuguese contributed to the Portuguese feeling alienated from their host population well into the 1970s, at the same time it contributed to their binding together as immigrants, and often consolidated their initial community identity. Many resorted to the support found in their families and other Portuguese immigrants, and established cultural and social community organisations where they felt more at home.

Pereira (2000:42) observes that the older generation and first generation of Portuguese immigrants in South Africa are very loyal to their traditions, especially regarding language and religious rites of passage. Glaser (2010:76) also points this out. He explains that the first generation immigrants continued to speak Portuguese at home, although they were educated primarily in English. However, although second and third generation Portuguese descendants today sometimes do not speak Portuguese, and have immersed themselves more widely in South African society, they still have an inherent feeling of pride and interest in their ethnic roots and cultural heritage, many still appreciating Portuguese culture, customs and music. Although their formal links to community structures have at times weakened and their identities have become more hybradised, the continued pride and interest in their cultural heritage has contributed to a community identity to this day. Glaser (2010:77) does however suggest that it may only be possible to develop a clear picture of the shifting generational identity that the local Portuguese and their descendants are experiencing today through detailed research into the life histories of these first, second and third generation immigrants.

These days the Portuguese are involved in all spheres of South African society. According to Da Rosa and Trigo (1986:98), they have formed business concerns in a variety of economic branches such as metallurgy, banking, mining, financial investment, export, fishing, and construction, besides entertainment and food. Ferreira (2001) also acknowledges the diverse activities the Portuguese that reside in South Africa are linked to including commerce and the services sectors, agriculture, the hospitality industry, civil construction, the fishing industry, the transport sector, government and education.

The status of the Portuguese community's contemporary historiography in South Africa

As mentioned earlier, although the Portuguese form a significant portion of the South African population and are an important part of the nation's make-up, there is little evidence of their existence in local modern-day history. However, in order to provide an understanding of the underrepresentation of the Portuguese in South African contemporary historiography and their interrelated underrepresentation in the archives, this section presents a brief discussion of the current status of the Portuguese community's historiography in South Africa.

Firstly, it is important to point out here that historical research on the Portuguese community is very limited, particularly their contemporary social history since the early twentieth century. This is appreciated by Glaser (2010) as well. The author states that there is surprisingly little recognition of the existence of the Portuguese in South African contemporary historiography. "While a great deal

has been written about earlier Portuguese involvement with the subcontinent dating back as far as the fifteenth century 'discoveries' – to my mind much more significant migrations of the twentieth century have largely been overlooked" (Glaser 2010:62). Similarly, van Graan (1988:60) argues that comprehensive modern-day research and literature on the Portuguese community in general is minimal. Van Graan (1988:60) goes on to say that the full extent of the contribution the Portuguese community has made to South Africa still needs to be researched and recorded.

The lack of contemporary historiography was also confirmed by the researcher. Minimal published sources that covered the modern-day history of the Portuguese community in South Africa directly and extensively were readily available. Those that could be located included sources by the authors Ferreira and Le Roux (2009), Glaser (2010), Leal (1977), McDuling (1995), Pereira (2000), Pina (2001), Theal (1896), and Van Graan (1988). One of the main scholars studying the Portuguese in South Africa has been the historian, OJO Ferreira. The main body of OJO Ferreira's work covers the theme of the contacts between South Africa and Portugal. Ferreira's work in this field is seen as a continuation of the work of the historian Eric Axelson (1913-1998) on the history of Portugal in Africa. However, although these authors have written extensively on the Portuguese in South Africa, even their works tend to focus on earlier times and the history of prominent Portuguese people during these past periods. For example, Ferreira's writings include works such as *Stranding van die São João, 1552-1553* (*The stranding of the São João, 1552-1553*), the history of the relations and exchanges between the Portuguese and South Africa from 1488 (Ferreira 2002; 2005), and accounts of Camoes's mythical Portuguese legends of the Adamastor during the "Age of Exploration" (Ferreira, 1995).

General books on the history of South Africa and Portugal, such as Birmingham's (1993) and Saraiva's (1989) broad writings on the history of Portugal, and Beck's (2000), Ross's (1999) and Thompson's (1996) texts on the history of South Africa – again although mentioning the Portuguese people in South Africa – also have a tendency to concentrate on the chronicles of the Portuguese in South Africa during the 'age of exploration', or on the history of the ex-Portuguese colonies, such as Angola and Mozambique and their political relations with South Africa.

Glaser (2010:80) does acknowledge that this is part of a wider issue though. He argues that within South Africa there is a well-developed literature on what he refers to as 'regional migrant labour'. However, South African literature on contemporary 'transcontinental immigration', though growing, is less developed. The South African Jewish and Indian communities probably have the richest transcontinental immigrant community historiography. However, enormous gaps remain. Glaser (2010:81) therefore recommends that, by "using whatever materials available, it could be a fruitful exercise to compare and contrast the experiences of these groups. A study of Portuguese immigration would add enormous depth to this kind of comparative exercise".

Glaser (2010:61) goes on to say that historians in post-apartheid South Africa are searching for 'smaller stories' as opposed to the previous powerful all-embracing apartheid historical narrative. He further points out that, although "many of these smaller stories were trampled in the earlier stampede of political relevance", in their own way they help to make sense of a complicated post-apartheid South Africa. "Rather than agonising over heterogeneity, or lack of solidarity, historians now evince a greater comfort with the diversity of experience". Glaser (2010:61-62) also points out another significant reality. He explains that it is important to be reminded that the story of mass migration in South Africa is not exclusive to black societies. Urban South Africa in particular is an extraordinary melting pot of immigrants from very diverse backgrounds. "If we scratch away a few

generations, nearly all urban residents are migrants of one sort or another". The Portuguese of South Africa represent a noticeable example of this migratory flow.

The underrepresentation of the Portuguese community in South Africa's archival heritage

Similar to their underrepresentation in South African contemporary historiography, the Portuguese community in South Africa is equally underrepresented in its archival collections. For most of their existence South African mainstream institutions of preservation, such as the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa, have focused their collecting efforts on preserving records that reflect the perspectives of the more prominent individuals and dominant communities of society, or those that were and are represented in positions of power or government. The National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act (South Africa 1996b) acknowledges this by stating, in sections 3 and 14, that there is the need to document aspects of the nation's experience, neglected by archival repositories in the past. The Act further indicates that there are gaps in the documentation of South Africa's societal memories and experiences. The National Archives and Records Services of South Africa (NARS Official Webpage 2014) supports the mandate of the Act by suggesting that it is necessary to "fill these gaps by bringing into the archives the stories and narratives which reflect the experiences and memory of those South Africans that had been marginalised in the contestation of social memory and the nation's experiences."

This focus, especially of the state or government and other mainstream archives in South Africa and their holdings on the narratives of power, has resulted in a lack of an archival heritage of many groups. These under-documented groups may be defined across gender, culture, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, politics, sexuality, and many other dimensions. Harris (2002:73) points this out by stating that experiences of the black indigenous populations have been poorly documented, and so have the voices of women, the disabled, and other groups – such as immigrant communities.

Nonetheless, just as in other countries such as the United States and Britain, movements influencing archives in South Africa – such as social history and postmodernist theories, 'post-custodial' approaches to archival preservation – and South Africa's recent transition to a democracy, have also brought about the emergence of archives, especially independent non-public institutions, that are committed to filling gaps in the country's social history, and telling the stories of some of these underrepresented groups (Harris, 2002:75-76). These include the South African History Archives Trust (SAHA), which strives to recapture the neglected history of previously underprivileged groups of South Africa, and the Rochlin Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

Unfortunately, as is the case abroad, Harris (2002:78) notes that, although there have been a few collecting efforts that have striven towards bringing the history and experiences of some of these underrepresented groups into the archives, a comprehensive orientation of this type in the archival field has similarly not been evident in South Africa. Many groups continue to be underrepresented and under-documented in our archives and other institutions of preservation.

The situation is no different for the Portuguese community in South Africa. A bibliographic search of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS) database supported the limited representation of materials of the Portuguese community. First of all, it was observed that the records found in existing archival collections were not those that relate to the experiences of the day-to-day life of ordinary

community members, since the growth of this community in South Africa due to immigration in large numbers during the early twentieth century, when the community reached its most populous stage here. Instead, the materials that were found were mostly records of the Portuguese 'discoveries' of South Africa during the 1500s, and accounts of important individuals and events relating to that period. Glaser (2010:62) also acknowledges this by explaining that "while a great deal has been written about earlier Portuguese involvement with the subcontinent dating back as far as the fifteenth century 'discoveries' – to my mind much more significant migrations of the twentieth century have largely been overlooked".

Second, it was also noticed that the archival records of the contemporary Portuguese community that were found, often did not represent the narratives of the members of the community itself. Instead, the records found were of the Portuguese from the perspective of the South African government, such as of the Portuguese as 'illegal entrants and immigrants', and records relating to the legal and 'racial' status of Portuguese immigrants within South African society. Similarly, the *Directory of Archival Repositories* (National Archives and Records Services of South Africa 2005) also confirms that there are no private archives, university special collections or community-based archives dedicated to documenting the experiences of the Portuguese community in South Africa today.

The South African Portuguese community-based organisations and the need to preserve their records

Communities per se do not create records. Individuals, families and the organisations that represent them are the ones that generate community records. Besides family, close friends and the church, in order to ease their adaptation to their adoptive country and to maintain a sense of community identity, the Portuguese established an array of community-based organisations, since the early 20th century.

South Africa's Portuguese community-based organisations

Rocha-Trindade (1988:334) elaborates by explaining that, although emigrants in general, including the Portuguese in South Africa, have sought physical locations such as neighbourhoods and cities that have larger numbers of existing members of their own community when settling in their host country, in order to aid in their adaptation, they also formed groups to support one another emotionally, socially and financially.

These groups tend to occur spontaneously yet, with time, they often recognise the need to formalise their existence. These groups initially originate to strengthen and expand family and friendship ties within the community, thus creating a larger social network where people meet, make contacts, exchange ideas and interact. Some of these informal groups, when becoming formal, continue to play this role by organising social events, holding folklore dances, wedding parties, and so on. On the other hand, some groups may originate in an informal manner, but if the members of the group have a dominant characteristic or interest they often – especially on becoming a formal organisation – consecrate that interest (Rocha-Trindade 1988:334-336). For example, a group that is mostly male that gets together informally might eventually create a community-based sports club, while an informal group that is mostly female may create a formal women's organisation that focuses on the welfare of the women of their community.

Rocha-Trindade (1988:347) also notes that these community organisations have played a vital role in maintaining a community identity and have assisted in minimising the dilution of the community, especially when it comes to second-and-third-generation community members. These organisations include welfare associations; cultural, social, recreational and sports associations; women's groups; youth groups; and coordinating bodies. The oldest Portuguese community organisation in South Africa was the now defunct *Associacao da Colonia Portuguesa*, which was founded in 1938 in Johannesburg. More recently, an overarching organisation was formed, namely the *Federacao das Associacoes Portuguesas da Africa do Sul*. Lately, online organisations – such as the Portuguese Forum – have also been created, which help Portuguese individuals stay in touch with one another and with events and developments within the community and broader South African society.

Although the Portuguese people have spread to almost every part of South Africa, the vast majority have settled and established themselves in the Gauteng area, especially Johannesburg (McDuling, 1995:8; Glaser, 2010). Several areas of Johannesburg, such as Bruma, Bedfordview, Kensington, Bertrams, Glenvista and Rosettenville have large Portuguese populations. These areas often provide a range of activities and services for the Portuguese communities there, such as churches that offer Portuguese services. Portuguese sports, social and cultural clubs and organisations, community newspapers and Portuguese restaurants are also found. In Johannesburg there is even a Portuguese school, *O Lusito*, and a bank, Mercantile bank (formerly Bank of Lisbon), that caters primarily for Portuguese South Africans. Then there are dedicated television channels (DSTV *Portuguesa*), newspapers such as *O Seculo* and *Voz Portuguesa*, their own radio slots, and their own community Internet sites, such as the Portuguese Forum. These organisations provide a space where Portuguese people can get together and make contacts. On these occasions, Portuguese music and sports games take place, cultural activities are encouraged such as concerts and folklore dances, and Portuguese events are organised.

These organisations act to further a variety of aspects of Portuguese community life in South Africa, and often exist to contribute to the welfare or wellbeing of the Portuguese community. Each has its own focus. For instance, some of these organisations were established according to the geographical or regional origins of their members, such as organisations catering for mainly the Portuguese from Madeira, for example, *Casa da Madeira*; others had a recreational or sports focus such as *Uniao Cultural, Recreativa e Desportiva*, while others have had a cultural focus such as the *Nucleo de Arte e Cultura*. Many of the originally Gauteng-based organisations, like the Portuguese Welfare Society and the Portuguese Women's League have branched out to other cities in South Africa, with offices in Cape Town and Durban.

Advocating for the need to draw in the records generated by Portuguese community-based organisations into the archival heritage of South Africa

As noted earlier, Leal (1977:1) acknowledges that the history of the Portuguese from the 15th to the 17th centuries is relatively well documented and archived. However, after the arrival and domination of the Cape by the Dutch and the subsequent loss of control of the region by the Portuguese, the documented history and experiences of this community here diminished, even though the actual Portuguese population continued to grow here especially since the early twentieth century. Glaser (2010: 62) also highlights this by stating that "... in spite of the fact that they are still comfortably the third largest 'white' group in South Africa (after those of Afrikaner and British ancestry) and that

they have left indelible layers on the culture and economy of the country, there is astonishingly sparse recognition of their existence in South African historiography."

Also, as noted earlier, the records found on the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS) database supports the limited recorded representation of the contemporary historical narrative of the Portuguese community in South Africa's institutions of preservation. The materials that were found were records about the Portuguese from the perspective of government, such as the Portuguese as 'illegal entrants and immigrants'. The records found were not the narratives of the experiences originating from Portuguese individuals, social groups or organisations – hence the fact that most of them do not represent the perspectives of the Portuguese themselves.

The above review of the literature available on the history of the Portuguese in South Africa, and the consequent lack of a narrative – particularly of the community's contemporary social history – that became evident from the review, supports the need to collect and preserve records of the community. In addition, the above discussion testifies to the fact that, since their arrival here, the Portuguese have been, and still are an integral part of South African society. As such, they have contributed, and still contribute, towards the shaping of South African experiences, history and identity. Harris (2002:80) further supports the call to preserve the histories of communities that are underrepresented in South Africa's archival heritage by recommending the need for archival collecting endeavours that complement and supplement the holdings of mainstream archives by filling its gaps. He goes on to say that collecting strategies in South Africa need to be driven by the post-colonial and post-apartheid imperative of finding those voices that have been disregarded or overlooked in the nation's archives. This includes minority and immigrant groups, such as the contemporary narrative of the Portuguese community in South Africa.

Therefore, collecting and safeguarding the records produced by the Portuguese community may assist in preserving a resource that goes a long way towards filling the 'large historiographical gap' of this under-researched South African community, and telling the story of a people that has both shaped and has been shaped by their adoptive home. Furthermore, materials collected will not represent a Portuguese story primarily; rather they will reflect the experiences of a South African community, its life within South Africa, and its contributions to this country – a story indigenous to South Africa. Any attempt to develop archival collections of this community will be one of a uniquely South African nature, and will therefore complement the archival heritage of South Africa. This documentary heritage may also contribute to the work of archivists, historians, researchers, and to community members and the broader South African society, gaining a more balanced understanding of its diverse past, a necessary step towards, as mentioned by Rautenbach and Malherbe (1998:58), building national unity amongst communities and nation building.

More specifically, the records created by their community-based organisations would be a means to broadening representation of the Portuguese community in South Africa, as the establishment and existence of these organisations mirrors closely the immigration patterns and lives of the Portuguese in South Africa. This is supported by the empirical findings of the study by Rodrigues (2013). The findings revealed that most of the South African Portuguese community-based organisations have been in existence for a relatively long period (some more than 70 years). The longevity of these organisations confirms that they may hold potential archival records going as far back as to when the earliest was formed and dating to the present. Their records are therefore valuable not only to the organisations, but also to the community and to researchers in general.

The results of the research by Rodrigues, van der Walt and Ngulube (2014) also showed that these organisations provided a diverse range of services and activities which further supports the presupposition that these may hold potential archival records that reflect both the history of the organisations themselves, and the daily lives of community individuals as lived through these organisations at events, festivals, social gatherings, sporting occasions and so on. The findings of the study also established that these community-based organisations create diverse and unique records that may show important aspects of the community's history and cultural life. Their records included administrative records of their daily activities and records which reflected the events, functions, programmes and other occasions these organisations were involved in together with community members. It is especially this documentation that could provide at least a partial archival record of the community, as these offer glimpses into the life of community members as lived through these organisations over the last seventy year or more. These included materials such as photographs of social events, video recordings of cultural events such as folklore dances, seminar and conference reports, organisational publications such as newsletters, ephemera such as pamphlets, and so on.

Finally, it is important to emphasise here that the means to incorporating the records generated by Portuguese community-based organisations into the archival heritage of South Africa may vary. Wurl (2005:71) argues that the question of who retains custody, ownership or control of community archival records, such as ethnic and immigrant collections, has become a controversial issue. This has led to archivists interested in community archiving considering alternatives to the traditional custodial role of an archives. Although a community archives collection is one that represents the history and experiences of a specific group regardless of where these materials may be kept or preserved, it is important to make a clear distinction between the different possible custody approaches that may be adopted for collecting community records. These possible approaches reflect the diverse thoughts on the custody, ownership and control of community records (Rodrigues 2015).

On the one hand these may include collecting initiatives that follow the more traditional approach of custody, where mainstream institutions acquire and transfer records created by a community to the mainstream collecting institutions, the latter being responsible for establishing, managing, preserving and making accessible these collections. These initiatives are often affiliated to institutions such as a national archive or a special collection of a university. On the other hand, collecting initiatives may include those that are borne within the community, situated within its own community structures and managed by it independently. These are often referred to as independent community-based archives. Lastly, there are also archival collecting initiatives of communities that adopt a collaborative or a stewardship framework towards the management and preservation of these records. These endeavours normally include partnerships between the community and a mainstream institution, where the skills and knowledge of each are garnered in order to sustain and enhance the collecting initiatives (Flinn 2011; Hamilton 2013; McCracken 2015; McDonald 2008).

The best approach to the above dilemma is not straightforward and will depend on a number of factors, such as the type of community organisation, the community's attitudes and perceptions of mainstream society and 'their' archives, or the will and/or the ability of mainstream archives in a given society in accommodating these records or providing assistance. Respecting the preferences of these Portuguese community-based organisations regarding the custody of their records will therefore be paramount. By respecting their preferences in this way, the archives and records management sectors will be in a better position to foster a healthier and lasting relationship with the

Portuguese community and their organisations that can only benefit the establishment and maintenance of an appropriate archival collecting endeavour for their records.

Conclusion

This article explored the representation of the local Portuguese community in South Africa's contemporary historiography and their related representation in the nation's archives. It was found that although the Portuguese community has contributed to and has been affected by the historical trends, events, and issues that have shaped South African economic life, politics, and culture - the presence of their contemporary history and their inclusion in the country's archival heritage is minimal.

In addition, this article proposed the collection and preservation of the records of the South African Portuguese community-based organisations, as a means to draw in - as far as possible - the contemporary history of the community into the archival heritage of South Africa. The rich diversity of the materials produced by these community-based organisations is often unique and may act as an important potential source for an archival record of this under-documented community. However, up to now, these records have been omitted from the archival heritage of South Africa because there have been no organised programmes to identify, collect, preserve and make them available. If these conditions persist and large parts of the Portuguese community's records are lost, the history of South Africa that survives will be incomplete.

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