

**MADEIRANS IN CAPE TOWN: IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTATION, MARRIAGE
AND SETTLEMENT, 1900s TO THE 1970s**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis traces the immigration of Madeirans to Cape Town and their settlement from the 1900s to the 1970s. It focuses on how exclusionary legislation from 1902 affected Madeiran entry, how they managed to circumvent it and the documents required for immigration over this long period. Particular attention is drawn to the role of women in the migration process, the nature of the households and the impact of women in shaping a settled Madeiran population. The thesis examines the role Portuguese organisations played and continue to play in maintaining cultural and religious values and the extent to which these values have been retained in the second and later generations.

This thesis seeks to ask to what extent the Madeiran migration experience bears commonalities with other groups, particularly Indians, or whether unique features are discernible.

Indians and Madeirans were both regarded as 'undesirable' and subject to literacy tests, domicile certificates, permits and certificates of identity. Illegal entry was common to both groups. Chain migration featured in their decision to leave the poverty of their homeland. The split-household was the dominant household form. Once settled, Indian and Madeiran wives played a key role in the business and in passing on their cultural and religious values. Both groups established cultural organisations. Despite these commonalities, Madeiran migration displayed certain unique features compared to Indians.

As Europeans, Madeirans with an employment contract were exempted from the language test. Fishing companies facilitated their entry. Madeiran males were inclined to leave their homeland permanently, while Indian males planned to return after retirement. Madeiran wives joined husbands fairly easily, whereas Indian wives faced a lengthy documentary process and child and polygamous marriages affected their entry. Marriage by proxy was a

unique feature to Madeirans. New Indian immigration was totally prohibited in 1913, while Madeirans encountered quota restrictions and whether the state considered them assimilable. While Madeirans encountered prejudice from other white South Africans, they were not hampered in their economic endeavours as were Indians, who were affected by group areas legislation. Both groups sought to maintain their cultural identities, which concentration in a fixed locale facilitated. These brief comparisons mark a small beginning to desegregate ethnic immigration histories.



DECLARATION

I declare that, *Madeirasans in Cape Town: Immigration Documentation, Marriage and Settlement, 1900s to the 1970s*, is my own work, that has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any university, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Date: November 2018

Signed:



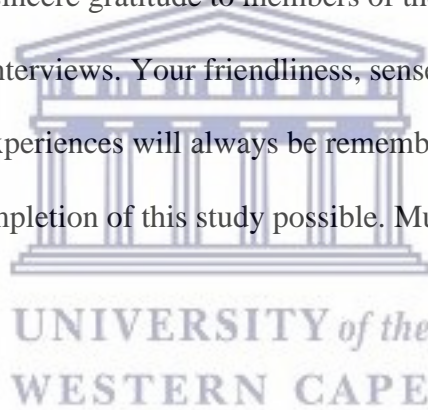
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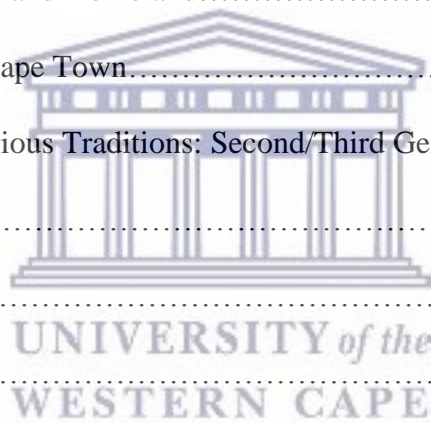


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INTRODUCTION

Migration has always been part of the human experience and the twentieth century saw large numbers of people than ever before moving across the globe and between more countries.¹

The massive movement and settlement of people has prompted W.M. Spellman to state that:

No longer would major cultural traditions live in isolation from each other; thanks to transoceanic migration, the intermingling of faces and values, of preferences and traditions, of understanding and its opposite, would shrink the intellectual world to the point where knowledge of the 'other' culture often required no more than getting to know one's immediate neighbour.²

This movement of people does not take place without constraints. The state determines whom it wishes to include or exclude from entering its borders. Sally Peberdy relates the following:

Across the world, people are moving in unprecedented numbers, prompted by numerous reasons to migrate from one country to another. But their ability to actually make the move is powerfully constrained by the gates that may be opened or closed to them. As they move, migrants are constantly made aware of their vulnerability to state practices of inclusion and exclusion. Unless they are embarking on an existence as an undocumented migrant, which merely lays out another set of fences to be crossed and negotiated, the ultimate decision about their entry and residence is made by the state apparatus of the intended destination and not by the individual migrants. Whatever the reasons, dreams or desires of the immigrants, it is held that every sovereign nation state has the right to determine who it will allow to cross its borders, who will be allowed to stay and for how long.³

People will move to places where they consider better opportunities exist for them and their families, thereby satisfying their aspirations for a better life. This was the case of the Madeirans, the focus of this thesis, who decided to settle in Cape Town from the 1900s to the 1970s.

¹ Lucy Williams, *Global Marriage* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3.

² W.M. Spellman, *The Global Community: Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (United Kingdom: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2002), back cover.

³ Sally Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants: National Identity and South Africa's Immigration Policies 1910-2008* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2009), 1-2.

The Portuguese are well-known as travellers and there is a surfeit of literature referring to their circumnavigation of the Cape on their voyages of discovery dating back to the late fifteenth century. In South Africa, these voyages of discovery have been prioritised in historiography and names such as Vasco da Gama and Bartholomew Diaz have gained almost legendary status. In these accounts of the past, the deeds of ‘great men’ are narrated to explain historical events. This is in keeping with the traditional Rankean paradigm of history i.e. ‘history from above’. In contrast to this history, this thesis will focus on the lives of ordinary people, who immigrated to Cape Town.

Despite the fact that South Africans of Portuguese descent are estimated to constitute ten to fifteen percent of the South African white population, it is a neglected field of research.⁴ This view is also expressed by Antonio Rodrigues when he states 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’.⁵ It is necessary to move the diasporic Madeiran community in Cape Town from the margins to the centre of the historical discourse in order for their story to be told and to be made known. By doing this, their memories and experiences and contributions to the social history of Cape Town will be safeguarded.

The volcanic Atlantic island of Madeira, a Portuguese possession covering an area of 270 square kilometres, remained unpopulated until the time that João Gonçalves Zarco officially discovered the island in 1419. Madeira was strategically placed as an Atlantic crossroads and drew merchants and workers to its shores: Iberian, Jewish, North African and northern European, ‘with some degree of procreation with the island’s nominally Portuguese

⁴ Clive Glaser, ‘Portuguese Immigrant History in Twentieth Century South Africa: A Preliminary Overview’, *African Historical Review* 42 (2), 2010, 61.

⁵ Antonio Rodrigues, ‘An Archival Collecting Framework for the Records Generated by South Africa’s Portuguese Community-Based Organisations in Gauteng’ (PhD thesis, University of South Africa, 2013), 21.

inhabitants'.⁶ The beauty and climate of the island made it popular with wealthy European travellers in the mid- nineteenth century, thereby supplementing its small-scale agriculture with a service orientated economy to provide for the temporary visitors. Although the focus of this study is the twentieth century, it is necessary to point out that emigration from Madeira was a common occurrence already in the nineteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, Madeira experienced a series of social and economic crises, especially because of the civil war of 1828-1834. The year 1847 was known as 'o ano de fome' ('the year of hunger'), because of a disease attacking potato crops, the staple diet. Vine diseases in 1852 and 1870 resulted in unemployment among agricultural workers.⁷ These social and economic factors, together with the unpopular male military conscription, caused Madeirans to look elsewhere for a life of economic betterment, away from the poverty which they were experiencing.

In 1835 Madeira, with 120,000 inhabitants, was regarded as overpopulated. From the 1840s to the 1860s, figures for legal migration from Madeira averaged 716 persons a year.⁸ The Anglophone Caribbean was a popular destination, with 12,000 Madeirans going to Guyana from 1835 and 1846, to fill the labour needs after the abolition of slavery.⁹ Smaller numbers went to Brazil, the Eastern United States, Venezuela, Argentina and to the coasts and highlands of southern Angola. Others took their sugar growing experience to Hawaii.¹⁰

MacDonald observes that Madeirans were attracted to Cape Town as an alternative 'to the

⁶ Andrew MacDonald, 'Colonial Trespassers in the Making of South Africa's International Borders, 1900 to c. 1950', (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2012), 84.

⁷ Jo-Anne S. Ferreira, 'Madeiran Portuguese Migration to Guyana, St. Vincent, Antigua and Trinidad: A Comparative Overview', *Portuguese Studies Review*, 14 (2), 2006/7, 67.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰ Malyn Newitt, *Portugal in European and World History*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2010), 175.

three-month voyage to Hawaii, the poverty and racial unrest of the Caribbean, and the congested urban centres of Brazil and the Eastern United States'.¹¹

Madeirasans had been migrating in small numbers to South Africa since the end of the nineteenth century without restrictions. As early as 1900, Madeirans were already purchasing property in central Cape Town.¹² In 1904 Cape Town had a population of 170,000 inhabitants,¹³ which, it is estimated, included just under 1,000 Madeirans, mostly male.¹⁴ MacDonald records that between 1885 and 1915 about 130 families had left Funchal for Cape Town.¹⁵

The unfettered restriction of entry into the Cape began to change with the Immigration Acts No. 47 of 1902 and No. 30 of 1906. Migrants were excluded on several grounds, including a lack of literacy in a European language. These exclusionary provisions were retained in the Union of South Africa's Immigration Regulation Act No. 22 of 1913. The language requirement affected the largely illiterate Madeirans' entry into Cape Town. However, those Madeirans with an employment contract with a firm, mostly related to the fishing industry, were exempted from the language requirement.

The Union government in its immigration legislation of 1913, 1930, 1937 and 1939 gave immigration officials wide discretionary powers to exclude applicants on grounds of 'desirability', based around the issue of 'assimilability'. After 1948, the Nationalist government adopted a more selective immigration policy based on ideological

¹¹ MacDonald, 'Colonial trespassers', 88.

¹² A copy of a mortgage bond dated 6 October 1900 in the names of Francisco Nicolau Ferreira and Manuel Lopes is in the possession of the writer.

¹³ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11.

¹⁴ Clive Glaser, 'The Making of a Portuguese Community in South Africa', 1900-1994', in Eric Morier and Michel Cahen (eds), *Imperial Migrations: Colonial Communities and Diaspora in the Portuguese World* (United Kingdom: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 217.

¹⁵ MacDonald, 'Colonial Trespassers', 90.

considerations. During the 1960s, for economic reasons, the government pursued a more relaxed immigration policy, which enabled many Madeirans to enter the country. It is estimated that 13,955 Madeirans entered South Africa legally between 1940 and 1981.¹⁶

The extent of the influx of Madeirans to Cape Town is illustrated by the growth of the Madeiran community in Woodstock from the 1940s onwards, which became known as ‘Little Madeira’. It is estimated that approximately 675 Madeirans, mostly fishermen and their families, settled in Woodstock between 1940 and 1980.¹⁷ Madeiran fishermen were highly sought after in Cape Town, because they were ‘renowned as among the most efficient in the world...’¹⁸ A smaller number of fishermen also settled in Green Point.

Their improved financial position through employment in the fishing trade, enabled Madeirans in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to move away from fishing to small business ownership, which included cafés, fruit and vegetable shops, fish- and -chips outlets and other food establishments.¹⁹ These Madeirans moved away from Woodstock to be close to their businesses established across Cape Town.

There were other Portuguese immigrants from mainland Portugal, who were better educated and were skilled as artisans. From the 1960s they were welcomed into South Africa to alleviate the shortage of artisans needed for the economic growth of South Africa. The collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire in Africa, saw the influx of Portuguese migrants into South Africa from Angola and Mozambique between 1974 and 1976. They were better

¹⁶Pedro Machado, ‘“Little Madeira”: The Portuguese in Woodstock c. 1940-1980’ (BA (Hons) dissertation, Department of History, University of Cape Town), 5.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁸ *Cape Times*, 7 July 1951, 9.

¹⁹ Machado, ‘Little Madeira’, 37

educated and more skilled than the Madeirans or the mainland Portuguese and they worked in the professions or were commercial farmers.²⁰

Aims and Research Question

This study seeks to investigate the migration of Madeirans to Cape Town from the 1900s to the 1970s. In this investigation, it is intended to pursue four main aims with a view to add to the historiography of the Madeiran community in Cape Town. Firstly, this study aims to show how exclusionary immigration legislation in the Cape from 1902 and then later South African legislation from 1913 affected Madeiran immigration and how they managed to circumvent it. Secondly, the thesis explores why migration to Cape Town occurred, with a focus on the role of women in the migration process and the impact of migration on family forms, marriage and life. Thirdly, this study highlights the role Portuguese organisations played and continue to play in Cape Town in maintaining the traditions and culture and finally, it explores the extent to which these values have been maintained by the second and later generations.

The backbone of this study will revolve around the question whether any differences and similarities can be discerned when the Madeiran experiences are compared to other ethnic groups, particularly Indians. South African immigration histories tend to be focused on narrow ethnic, national or religious groups. While the focus of this thesis is on Madeirans, it seeks to push the research agenda further by asking questions about the distinctiveness or not about the Madeiran experiences. Due to the limited length of this study, comparisons will focus primarily on entry into the Cape ports, the consequences of the split migrant families, marriage, the experiences of children and the role of women in the settled communities.

²⁰ Glaser, 'The Making of a Portuguese Community in South Africa', 222

The aims and research question were motivated by an existing body of literature that focused on Madeiran and Indian immigration to South Africa, on broader questions of immigration policy and legislation and documents of mobility.

Literature Review

The first body of literature revolves around sources dealing specifically with Madeiran migration to South Africa. In this regard, the work of Pedro Machado and Clive Glaser are important, as they provided a point of departure for this study.

Pedro Machado's dissertation is the only academic work on the Madeiran community in Cape Town and it focuses solely on Woodstock from the 1940s to the 1980s.²¹ His work covers four significant themes. Firstly, he gives an insight into life in Madeira and the reasons for leaving the island. Secondly, Machado argues that the fishing opportunities lured Madeirans to Cape Town, from where they travelled to South-West Africa (now Namibia) for the six months fishing season. Woodstock, being close to the docks, made it an ideal place of settlement. Machado gives useful information on the settlement patterns in Woodstock. Thirdly, he devotes a chapter in examining the occupations of the Madeirans, most of which were centred around the fishing trade. From the late 1960s to the 1980s the Madeirans, whose financial position had improved, moved away from fishing to small-business ownership. Finally, he focuses on the maintenance of an ethnic identity among the Madeirans in Woodstock, concluding that group cohesion provided them not only with a sense of identity, but facilitated their adaptation to an unfamiliar environment. While he does point to the role of women as cultural transmitters within the family, Machado acknowledges that the experiences of immigrant women could have warranted greater attention.²²

²¹ Machado, 'Little Madeira', 1-66.

²² Ibid., 58.

Clive Glaser has written several articles on the Madeiran community, but his study is largely restricted to the Johannesburg area. One of his major areas of focus is to point to illegal immigration.²³ Glaser argues that illegal entry became a central feature of the Madeiran immigrant experience between the 1920s and 1970s, because the state considered them as undesirable citizens. His work concentrates primarily on overland illegal immigration through Lourenço Marques, facilitated by smuggling networks.

Glaser's second major contribution is his focus on the migration of Madeiran women to South Africa through various forms of marriage, such as arranged marriages and marriage by proxy. Once settled in South Africa, 'women were confined largely to the home, the farm and the shop' Glaser argues that the economic role of women in contributing to the household has been understated.²⁴

As significant as the contributions of Machado and Glaser are, this study seeks to build on this foundation by investigating Madeiran immigration further. In this regard, this thesis focuses on the way in which the literacy test was administered and the kinds of documents required for immigration. Furthermore, case studies from the immigration files need to be incorporated into the work on illegal immigration. As Glaser's study is Johannesburg-based, there is a case for investigating the role of women further, such as the lives of women married to fishermen. The experiences of children in Madeira who then settled in Cape Town is another area that needs to be explored. Also, a comparison with the experiences of other ethnic groups is central to this thesis.

A second body of literature refers to immigration policy and legislation. There are significant studies of immigration policy in South Africa represented by scholars such as Sally Peberdy

²³ Clive Glaser, 'White But Illegal: Undocumented Madeiran Immigration to South Africa, 1920s-1970s', *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, 31:1, 74-98

²⁴ Clive Glaser, 'Home, Farm and Shop: The Migration of Madeiran Women to South Africa, 1900 – 1980' *Journal of South African Studies*, 38:4, 885-897.

and Jonathan Klaaren. Peberdy elaborates on immigrant legislation from 1910-2008. She highlights the changing immigration policies by the state, which attempted to create criteria that selected immigrants who consolidated white rule, while protecting itself from ‘spiritual and political contamination’.²⁵ This was especially true in the post-1948 era, when a more intensive selection immigration policy was followed. This was based on the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism, which called for a ‘civilised’ white South Africa.²⁶

Klaaren elaborates on the regulating of mobility through legislation and official practices from 1897 to 1937 for those regarded as ‘undesirable’. These legislative measures were geared to regulate the mobility of three population groups: Indian, Chinese and African migrants. Although they were economically desirable, they were politically problematic. The legislative measures as it applied to limiting migration from India, proved especially relevant for my purpose.²⁷ Peberdy and Klaaren’s work supplant the earlier and now out-dated study of policy by Edna Bradlow.²⁸

Klotz’s recent work on policy also provides a useful examination of the origins of the so-called ‘Natal Formula’ or literacy test, which was adopted by the other South African colonies and eventually by other parts of the British Empire such as Australia.²⁹ This thesis explores the literacy test further in so far as it affected Madeiran immigrants.

Recent studies of immigration have moved beyond that of policies. The new focus, which constitutes the third body of literature, which will be elaborated on below, has been on documents of identity (e.g. the passenger form, permits and certificates of identity) and its

²⁵ Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants*, 135.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁷ Jonathan Klaaren, *From Prohibited Immigrants to Citizens: The Origins of Citizenship in South Africa* (Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2017), 64-94.

²⁸ Edna Bradlow, ‘Immigration into the Union 1910-1948: Policies and Attitudes’ (D. Phil thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978).

²⁹ Audie Klotz, *Migration and National Identity in South Africa, 1860-2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 61-97.

dual nature, interrogation of new arrivals at the port, the authority of immigration officers and syndicates of fraud. Documentation of identity has played a key role in the migration process and experience.

Jane Caplan and John Torpey maintain that establishing the identity of individual people 'is increasingly recognised as fundamental to the multiple operations of the state'³⁰. In the phrase of James Scott, the creation of a 'legible people' i.e. a people open to the power and surveillance of the state, is a distinct feature of modern statehood.³¹ Although Caplan and Torpey emphasise the control and surveillance ('panoptic gaze') which the state exercises, they do acknowledge that documents can be both 'enabling' and 'subordinating' and that it confers both rights as well as police powers.³² Individual identification procedures are enabling in the sense that they confer certain rights on citizens, which includes, amongst others, the right to vote and applying for social grants from the state. Conversely, documents can be subordinating if used, for example, to uphold an unjust system. The requirement that black South Africans were required to carry a pass as identification during the apartheid era is an example of this.

This dual implication of documentation is taken further by Ilse About, James Brown and Gayle Lonergan, who firstly argue that there is a need to take a more 'positive' view of looking at documents of identity, by emphasising the benefits of rights and security which they confer.³³ To confer benefits on its citizens involves a number of proofs, 'from written documents to bodily characteristics, from spoken testimony to numbered identifiers'.³⁴ Yet,

³⁰Jane Caplan and John Torpey, 'Introduction' in Caplan and Torpey (eds), *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 1.

³¹*Ibid.*, 1.

³²*Ibid.*, 5

³³Ilse About James Brown and Gayle Lonergan, 'Introduction' in About, Brown and Lonergan (eds), *Identification and Registration in Transnational Perspective: People, Places and Practices* (New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 5.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 1.

they further state that the identifying of individuals (the paper document or number identifier) by the state carries negative connotations, linked to some of the worst atrocities carried out by totalitarian regimes.³⁵ The numbering of the Jews during the Second World War by the Nazi's is an example of this. Despite these negative connotations, About, Brown and Lonergan argue that 'recognition in the eyes of the state enables rather than disables the citizen'.³⁶

In discussing registration i.e. 'that act of producing a written record'³⁷ Keith Breckenridge and Simon Szreter argue against the misplaced certainty of some scholars, such as James Scott, that the state is obsessed with the 'will to know'. They contend that the state is not always driven by the 'will to know'. They discount the view that the increase in knowledge by the state represents an increase in its power to govern, as states often 'sought to restrict, abandon or devolve registration, without any direct effect on their authority and power'.³⁸ In his chapter, Breckenridge discusses the dismantling of civil registration of rural black people in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century. He states that the reason for this was not only the reluctance to spend money on Africans in the countryside, but disagreements about registration methods, resulting in 'administrative inertia'. This 'will not to know' was to the advantage of the state.³⁹ Several chapters in this edited collection also focus on the rights attached to registration.

The works of Dhupelia-Mesthrie and MacDonald form a significant part of the literature on documents of identity. Dhupelia-Mesthrie has contributed to the study of immigration

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁷ Simon Szreter and Keith Breckenridge, 'Editors' Introduction in K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter (eds), *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁹ Keith Breckenridge, 'No Will to Know: The Rise and Fall of African Civil Registration in Twentieth-Century South Africa' in Breckenridge and Szreter (eds), *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 357-384.

documents and rituals of admission by focusing specifically on how it affected those arriving from India. She argues that despite state power and control at the Cape ports, individuals managed to subvert the system. She looks at how permits and certificates of identity were fraudulently obtained, pointing to extensive 'games' between officials and immigrants. These 'cat and mouse' games were brought to the fore in the identification of minor sons (under sixteen years) from India in the first half of the twentieth century. Documents from India were mistrusted and eventually there was a greater reliance on the visual assessment by the immigration officer, which included intense questioning about the veracity of documents. Medical examinations were also conducted to establish the accuracy of ages on documents.⁴⁰

Extensive corruption within the Immigration Department in Cape Town from 1902 to 1916, aided by senior officials and Indian immigration agents/interpreters, exposed the weaknesses of the documentary system and its ability to control the entry of 'undesirables' into the country.⁴¹

Furthermore, Dhupelia-Mesthrie comments on the emotions which documents evoked, referring to an individual who suffered 'great mental and emotional stress' when he had mislaid his permit on his way to India.⁴² This leads one to a consideration of paper documents as more than paper, but emphasises its affective qualities.

Andrew MacDonald, like Dhupelia-Mesthrie, has focused on the extensive fraud taking place and the manipulation of documentation among those travelling across the borders that

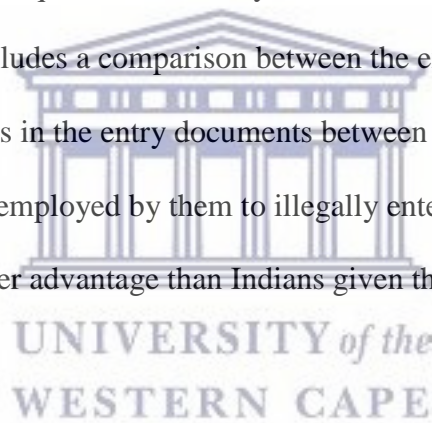
⁴⁰ See Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Cat and Mouse Games: The State, Indians in the Cape and the Permit System, 1900s-1920s' in I. About, J. Brown and G. Lonergan (eds), *Identification and Registration Practices in Transnational Perspective: People, Papers and Practices* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 185-202 and Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'False Fathers and False Sons: Immigration Officials in Cape Town, Documents and Verifying Minor Sons from India in the First Half of the Twentieth Century' in Dhupelia-Mesthrie (ed), *Paper Regimes, Kronos 40*, November 2014, 99-132.

⁴¹ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Engaging with the Bureaucracy: Indian Immigration Agents and Interpreters in Cape Town, South Africa (1902-16)', *South Asian Studies*, 33:2, 2017, 180-198.

⁴² Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Paper Regimes' in U. Dhupelia-Mesthrie (ed), *Paper Regimes, Kronos 40*, November 2014, 11.

separated South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland. He shows that despite more stringent controls at the borders from 1920, ‘undesirables’ continued to cross into South Africa in large numbers. This was made possible by syndicates, based in Lourenço Marques, who ‘created systems for fictitious applications, or bought up used permits, modified them with chemicals and resold them.’⁴³ Some schemes avoided the Komatipoort border post altogether, travelling overland on foot around the border post. From the work of Dhupelia-Mesthrie and MacDonald, fraud and the evasion of state controls altogether are essential features in the study of identity documents.

The literature on immigration documentation, rituals of admission, fraud and the significance of the literacy test points to new questions that may be asked of immigration and new themes that may be explored. This includes a comparison between the experiences of Madeirans and Indians. Were there differences in the entry documents between these two ethnic groups? Were there different methods employed by them to illegally enter the Cape ports? Were Madeiran immigrants at a better advantage than Indians given their role in the fishing industry?



A fourth body of literature points to the importance of focusing on gendered migration. This is highlighted in the work of Dhupelia-Mesthrie, Nicholas Glytsos, Louise Ryan *et al*, and Glaser. In her study of Indian migration, Dhupelia-Mesthrie identifies the ‘split-household’ as being the dominant household formation in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁴ Women experienced prolonged periods of separation from their husbands, with some reluctant to leave India. Once Indian women arrived in Cape Town, they became important role-players in the home and in the family business, even, out of necessity, undertaking tasks not normally

⁴³ Andrew MacDonald, ‘Forging the Frontiers: Travellers and Documents on the South Africa-Mozambique Border, 1890s-1940s’ in Dhupelia-Mesthrie (ed), *Paper Regimes, Kronos 40*, 2014, 165.

⁴⁴ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Split-Households: Indian Wives, Cape Town Husbands and Immigration Laws, 1900s to 1940s’, *South African Historical Journal*, 66:4, 635-655.

associated with women, such as repairing shoes.⁴⁵ Moving from gender, Dhupelia-Mesthrie also draws attention to the immigration of minors to Cape Town from India. The language problem and the encounters at school forms part of the narrative.⁴⁶

Glytsos deals with the changing roles of women staying behind when male members immigrated to Australia from Kythera, a small island in southern Greece, which started during the pre-World Two period and continuing in the 1950s and 1960s. In the split migrant family, the wife undertook the responsibilities of the husband as head of the household, giving her a new identity in a traditionally patriarchal society. Male emigration was therefore made possible by the wife taking on this new role. Glytsos argues that the elimination of patriarchal domination in the absence of the husband did not substantially liberate the wife, because of ‘well-rooted “inner” attributes and oppressive social behaviour’.⁴⁷

Ryan *et al*, focus on the migration of Poles to the United Kingdom during the 2000s. In most cases, husbands came first, followed by the wives and children. The wives played an active part in the decision-making process to emigrate. Their reasons were based on long-term considerations, such as the education of the children.⁴⁸ The split-household was seen by the wife as a necessity which had to be endured for a few years, although it brought about difficulties and tension within the marriage. The fear of the marriage breaking up prompted some wives to join their husbands, although they did not encourage the wives to come.⁴⁹ For

⁴⁵ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Gujarati Shoemakers in Twentieth-Century Cape Town: Family, Gender, Caste and Community’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38:1, 167-182.

⁴⁶ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘India-South Africa Mobilities in the First Half of the Twentieth Century: Minors, Immigration Encounters in Cape Town and Becoming South African’ in Elodie Razy & Marie Rodet (eds), *Children on the Move in Africa: Past & Present Experiences of Migration* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2016), 171.

⁴⁷ Nicholas P. Glytsos, ‘Changing Roles and Attitudes of Women Staying Behind in Split Households when Men Emigrate: The Story of the Secluded Greek Island of Kythera with Mass Emigration to Australia’, *Women’s Studies International Forum* 31, 2008, 102.

⁴⁸ Louise Ryan, Rosemary Sales, Mary Tilki and Bernadetta Siara, ‘Family Strategies and Transnational Migration: Recent Polish Migrants in London’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2009, 67.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

women, migration also resulted in double caring responsibilities. This could take the form of caring for a child in the London and the care of a sick child in Poland needing full-time supervision, by sending money to Poland to pay for professional care. Transnational caring is a highly gendered issue, with mostly women involved in this activity.⁵⁰

Glaser's study of gendered migration from Madeira to South Africa focuses on women in the migration experience. His aim is to 'place gender relationships at the centre of the migration processes'.⁵¹ In doing this, various forms of marriage, family reunification, the labour of women and their role as cultural bearers forms part of the narrative.⁵²

The works on gendered migration contributed to the writer's interest in developing a focus on the role of women in the decision to migrate to Cape Town. The situation of women in Madeira, the aspect of marriage as a means of leaving the island, the consequences of the split-household and their role and contribution once settled in their new homeland are compared to other ethnic groups.

This review of the literature suggests that while there has been some pioneering work on Madeirans in Cape Town and in Johannesburg, there is a case made for exploring further Madeiran immigration to Cape Town by drawing on newer questions asked in the literature about immigration experiences, documents of identity and by focusing on women and children and not just male migrants. While Madeirans constituted a distinct group and were regarded as such by immigration authorities, this thesis seeks to probe how distinctive their immigration was or similar to other groups such as Indians.

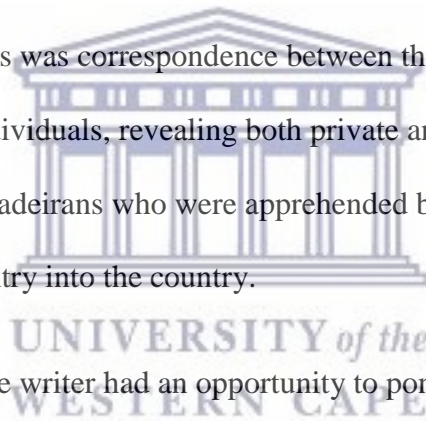
⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵¹ Glaser, 'Home, Farm and Shop', 885.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 885-897.

Research Methodology

This thesis draws on significant archival sources found at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service in Cape Town. The series ‘Principal Immigration Officer’ (PIO) provides a record of entries of white immigrants to the Cape from about 1902 to the 1960s. Utilising an index of names, approximately one hundred and fifty files of Madeiran immigrants were consulted over a period of eighteen months. The files document what immigration authorities were interested in, so they by no means provide full accounts of immigration experiences. Some files contain no more than a page or two, while others are slightly fuller. However, there are small traces of lives led more fully outside the eye of the immigration bureaucracy and they do yield important information. Documents that were required for entry into the Cape Town port were found, as was correspondence between the immigration department and the fishing companies/ individuals, revealing both private and working details. The files also contained narratives of Madeirans who were apprehended by immigration officers and appeared in court for illegal entry into the country.



While sitting in the archive, the writer had an opportunity to ponder on what two scholars have written about the archive. In his work, Achille Mbembe presents two images of the archive: a cemetery and a religious space. A cemetery, because fragments of lives (the documents) are interned there. A religious space, because a set of rituals binding archival staff and visitors continuously takes place. The archive also creates an atmosphere of silence, like a religious surrounding.⁵³ Of significance is his point that researchers only have fragments from which to work. Carolyn Hamilton *et al* have drawn attention to the danger of

⁵³ Achille Mbembe, ‘The Power of the Archive and its Limits’ in Carolyn Hamilton *et al* (eds), *Reconfiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2002), 19.

relying exclusively on government records, because of their colonial and apartheid biases.⁵⁴

The official archive is only one source used in this thesis.

A second important source was the private papers of the Chief Immigration Officer. The C.W. Cousins Papers at the University of Cape Town Libraries provided insights into the life and thoughts of this official and contains his self-published memoir.⁵⁵

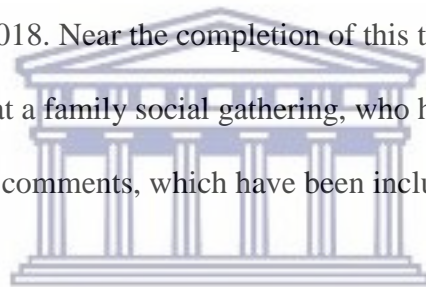
A third significant source for this study are oral interviews. Interviews were conducted with 28 Madeirans (or those with a Madeiran ancestry) and two others who were born in Portugal and who came to Cape Town as adults. Of the 28 Madeirans, three were born in Madeira and came to Cape Town as adults. A further nine of the interviewees were born in Madeira but came to Cape Town as children, between the ages of four to fourteen. Vanessa Mar-Molinero refers to them as the one-point-five generation.⁵⁶ For the purpose of this study, they will be classified as second-generation Madeirans, because their fathers preceded them. A further twelve of the interviewees are second generation Madeirans born in Cape Town, while four are third generation Madeirans. The ages of interviewees ranged from 24 to 92 years of age, with the age distribution as follow: 20 -29: four; 30-39: three; 40-49: none; 50-59: seven; 60-69: six; 70-79: seven and above 79: three. All the interviewees live in the Cape Town metropole, excepting two, with one living in Paarl and the other in Sandbaai (near Hermanus). Eight of the 30 interviewees were male.

⁵⁴ Caroline Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid, 'Introduction' in Carolyn Hamilton *et al* (eds), *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2002), 9. Thozama April, in her work 'Theorising Women: Intellectual Contributions of Charlotte Maxeke to the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa' (PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2015), 202, makes the comment that collections in the liberation archives are also prone to the same kind of selectivity found in colonial archives.

⁵⁵ University of Cape Town Libraries Manuscript Division, *Reflections of a Nineteenth Century Immigrant 1896-1950* (Self-published, Tzaneen, 1950) in Cousins Papers BC 1154, E4.

⁵⁶ Vanessa Mar-Molinero, 'Family and Transmission: Collective Memory in Identification Practices of Madeirans on Jersey', *Portuguese Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2010, 94, footnote 3.

Interviewees had the choice of anonymity, with a majority choosing to be named. Only one interviewee requested to remain anonymous, while another preferred to remain anonymous when answering a specific question about marriage. All agreed to the interview being recorded. The first-generation Madeirans could understand English, and when they were unsure about a question their son/daughter explained it to them in Portuguese. Those who found it difficult to express themselves in English, were assisted by their children. Interviews primarily explored questions about the lives and experiences of informants in Madeira (where applicable) and Cape Town. The interviews thus took the form of life histories. The interviewees spoke freely, allowing them to recall memories important to them, although questions were posed to keep the informants 'on track'. The interviews were conducted between July 2017 and May 2018. Near the completion of this thesis, the writer met a Madeiran in September 2018 at a family social gathering, who had come to Cape Town as a child. He made a few relevant comments, which have been included in chapters two and three.



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The writer is aware that there is an over-representation of female interviewees, but males were reluctant to be interviewed. Three refused to be interviewed and two did not respond to my request for an interview. Additional male participants would have given a more balanced view to this study. Also, only three pioneer Madeirans were interviewed. This group is ageing, mostly being in their late seventies and eighties. The writer could sense that the children were mostly reluctant for their parent(s) to be interviewed. The Madeirans who came to Cape Town as children were a rich source of information. They were able to give memories of their childhood in Madeira, leaving Madeira by boat, growing up in Cape Town and the challenges which this entailed.

Charles Van Onselen, who relied on extensive oral histories to write the biography of a black sharecropper, makes the rather conservative statement that oral testimony, even when cross-checked for accuracy, ‘counts for little unless it can be made to square up with such documentary evidence’.⁵⁷ His focus here is on verification of facts. He, however, points to the importance of probing the ‘codes’ of recall that prompted Kas Maine to relate certain stories.⁵⁸

The criticism against oral sources is that it lacks objectivity. Alessandro Portelli argues that although oral sources are not objective, this applies to every source, even written sources. The content of the written source is always open to interpretation.⁵⁹ He urges historians to embrace these subjectivities. Portelli is less concerned with verification rather than understanding why people narrate stories in the way they do. Thus, he states that ‘the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that “wrong” statements are still “psychologically “true”...’⁶⁰ Portelli further comments that ‘memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creating meaning’.⁶¹ This approach thus shifts the historian’s focus from trying to retrieve new information to one that seeks to read the meanings of what is spoken about and not spoken about. Furthermore, the content of oral sources depends ‘on what the interviewer puts into it in terms of questions, dialogue, and personal relationship’.⁶² This then stresses the role of the interview situation as a generator of a particular type of knowledge taking place in a context.

⁵⁷ Charles van Onselen, ‘The Reconstruction of a Rural Life from Oral Testimony: Critical Notes on the Methodology Employed in the Study of a Black South African Sharecropper’, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol 20, No. 3, April 1993, 505.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 499-500.

⁵⁹ Alessandro Portelli, ‘What Makes Oral History Different’ in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 70.

⁶⁰ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Forms and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 51.

⁶¹ Portelli, ‘What Makes Oral History Different’, 69.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 70.

Field and Swanson argue that memories presented through oral histories will not always give verifiable evidence. However, oral narratives are of important research significance in ‘trying to understand how and why people believe what they believe, think what they think, and... act in the ways that they do...’⁶³

Portelli argues that oral history has importance in giving information about illiterate people or marginalised groups ‘who’s written history is either missing or distorted’.⁶⁴ This is also reflected in the view of Sean Field when he states that ‘the unnoticed makers of history also want to be acknowledged and remembered’.⁶⁵ Paul Thompson argues that oral history ‘can be used to change the focus of history itself, and open up new areas of inquiry’.⁶⁶ Thus, from this perspective, oral history is vital as a source to uncover information and to deal with neglected histories.

Luise White contends that taken together, the oral and the written sources should ‘add up to a vivid picture of social life and the imagination that springs from it...’⁶⁷ The key word here is ‘imagination’, which like that of Portelli, stresses the process of memory-making.

Unlike the archive, the interviews captured the emotions of interviewees and gave insights which the archive was not capable of doing. Experiences, memories and personal anecdotes which were important to the interviewees came to the fore. This is especially true in their representation of Madeira as a place of poverty from which they had to depart, despite leaving their homes, family and friends behind. Furthermore, oral narratives gave an

⁶³ Sean Field and Felicity Swanson, ‘Introduction’ in Sean Field, Renate Meyer and Felicity Swanson (eds), *Imagining the City: Memories and Culture in Cape Town* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007), 9.

⁶⁴ Portelli, ‘What Makes Oral History Different’, 64.

⁶⁵ Sean Field, ‘Oral Histories of Forced Removals’ in Sean Field (ed), *Lost Communities, Living Memories – Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town* (Claremont: David Philip Publishers (Pty) Ltd, 2001), 12.

⁶⁶ Paul Thompson, ‘The Voice of the Past: Oral History’, in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 22.

⁶⁷ Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumour and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 12.

understanding of what happened in the years after the interviewees had arrived in Cape Town. While there are many ways in which oral history narratives may be approached as is suggested above, this thesis has sought fundamentally to use oral interviews as a source to counter the limits of the archive and to generate knowledge about immigration and settlement. The accounts presented here represent how interviewees have made sense of their pasts in their present.

Chapter Outline

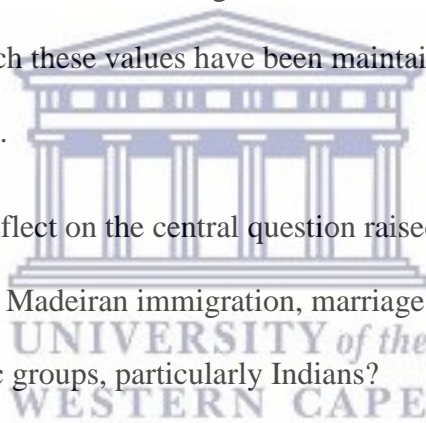
This thesis is organised into three main chapters. Chapter One, titled *Exclusions, Immigration Documentation and Illegal Entry*, argues that Madeirans were regarded as ‘undesirable’ immigrants. It will be pointed out that legislative measures from 1902 to 1939 curtailed the entry of Madeirans into Cape Town. Literacy tests, domicile certificates, permits/certificates of identity and quotas form part of the narrative. Furthermore, the immigration policies of the National Party government from 1948 to 1960 were based largely on ideological considerations, by its attempt to encourage immigrants who would be able to assimilate more readily into white, Afrikaner society. From the late 1960s onwards, the immigration policy was governed by religious considerations. These restrictive measures gave rise to illegal immigration. ‘Jumping ship’ at the Cape Town harbour became a frequent practice. Overland entry into the country through Lourenço Marques (mostly) to Johannesburg and then to Cape Town will also be explored.

Chapter Two, titled *Marriages and the Split-Household*, argues that it was the poverty of the island which provided the impetus for women to marry and to eventually leave their homeland. It was the women who made the emigration of their husbands possible. The chapter will elaborate on the consequences of the split-household, where the husband set out to establish himself in Cape Town, while the wife waited in Madeira for the husband to ‘call’

for her. It also examines the forms of marriage such as arranged marriages and marriage by proxy, with the parents and family members playing a significant role in the choice of a marriage partner.

Chapter Three, titled *Making Lives in Cape Town*, argues that once settled in Cape Town, the Madeiran women played a key role in the household and in the family business. This included 'passing on' the cultural and religious values and usually working long hours in the business. Their labour contributed significantly to the success of the enterprise. It further examines how the settled Madeiran community was viewed by Capetonians and others. The chapter also elaborates on the part played by Madeiran organisations in Cape Town in the maintenance of the Portuguese cultural and religious values. This chapter concludes by reflecting on the extent to which these values have been maintained within the second and third- generation of Madeirans.

The concluding chapter will reflect on the central question raised by this thesis: can any distinctiveness be discerned in Madeiran immigration, marriage and settlement experiences when compared to other ethnic groups, particularly Indians?



CHAPTER ONE

EXCLUSIONS, IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTATION AND ILLEGAL ENTRY

Introduction

All it required in those happier times was a dissatisfaction with one's prospects in England, an interest aroused in South Africa, a readiness to adventure, the taking of Castle liner passage, a move with one's few belongings through the Cape Town customs shed, with no questions asked, no papers demanded, no money produced. It was a free and friendly country in a free world. It was a case of – "go where and do what you please" ... It was all as easy and happy as that.¹

This was the experience of Clarence Wilfred Cousins when he entered Table Bay in 1896. All this would change and Cousins, as Chief Immigration Officer in Cape Town from 1905 to 1915, would play a key role in this regard. His name is linked to the formulation and implementation of the Immigration Act of 1902 and 1906 of the Cape Colony, as well as the Immigration Regulation Act of 1913. This Act remained the principal Act of South African immigration into the 2000s.

The first aim of this chapter is to show that the Acts which have been mentioned were Acts of exclusion, geared to exclude 'undesirables' from entering Table Bay harbour. Migrants from India and poor East Europeans, mostly Jewish, were regarded as 'undesirable.' Madeirans also came under scrutiny regarding their suitability as immigrants, as their darker skin complexion² made their possible integration into the European population questionable. Like Indians, Madeirans had to undergo and pass a literacy test before permission to enter the Cape ports was granted. Madeirans were in a more favourable position than Indians, because even those unable to meet this requirement, they were admitted if they had an employment contract. It will be revealed that domicile certificates, permits/certificates of identity were utilised by both Indians and Madeirans to ensure their re-entry into the colony, but differed in

¹ Cousins Papers, *Reflections of a Nineteenth Century Immigrant 1896-1950*, 6.

² Not all Madeirans are dark-skinned; there are many who are fair-skinned, depending from which part of the island they come from.

certain respects regarding their completion requirements. The chapter will begin with the reasons for the implementation of the literacy test. Secondly, the immigration legislative measures passed in the 1930s will receive attention. This will be coupled with the vacillating policies of the Nationalist government from 1948 to the early 1970s and its impact on Madeiran immigration. Thirdly, it will be pointed out that Madeirans were highly sought-after by the fishing companies and that these companies had an influential role in overturning decisions by the immigration bureaucracy in the interest of their Madeiran employees. Fourthly, illegal immigration was common to Indians and Madeirans, and it will be pointed out that initially their strategies for illegal entry differed but later converged. The cornerstone of this chapter will revolve around the question whether similarities and differences can be discerned between Indians and Madeirans regarding policy, documents and illegal immigration.

Protests: the influx of ‘undesirable’ immigrants

In contrast to the other three southern African states, the Cape Colony, under British colonial rule with its so-called ‘liberal tradition’, had not introduced regulatory immigration legislation by the late nineteenth century. Legislative measures restricting immigration of ‘races from Asia’, predominately from India, were introduced in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State in 1885 and Natal in 1897.³ Once Natal’s Immigration Restriction Act 1 of 1897 was implemented, the flow of Indians to Cape Town increased dramatically.

Between 1891 and 1902 Cape Town experienced an economic boom, with imports through Cape Town growing from £3,000,000 in 1891 to £14,000,000.⁴ The Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) had aided this boom, by enabling local firms to supply the needs of the military and the

³ Karen Harris, ‘Paper Trail: Chasing the Chinese in the Cape (1904 – 1933)’ in Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie (ed), *Paper Regimes*, *Kronos* 40, November 2014, 140, footnote 55.

⁴ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice In Victorian Cape Town*, 129-130.

civilian population, whose numbers had increased by refugees fleeing the Rand. This prosperity also attracted Indians, seeking a better life than the poverty and stagnating village economies in India.⁵ The influx of Indians, who were denied landing in Natal, gave rise to a lobby in Cape Town, which not only agitated against the Indian influx, but also directed its attention towards the poor East Europeans arrivals into Cape Town.

The hysteria of public opinion was fuelled by the media. This can be gauged from the remarks of the editor of the *Cape Times* in an issue dated 19 October 1901. He argued that Natal, by the introduction of restrictive immigration laws, had protected itself from the ‘scum of the Far East’ and if the Cape did not do the same, it would become ‘a dumping ground’. Hence, legislation was necessary to protect the Cape ‘from the undesirable elements from the East and European ports’.⁶ Milton Shain argues that ‘the alien became a handy scapegoat for the ills of post-war Cape Town society’.⁷ In order to appease public opinion by stopping the flow of Indians and Yiddish-speaking East Europeans to Cape Town, the Cape parliament moved hastily to introduce exclusionist immigration legislation. Andrew MacDonald argues that this legislation was ‘designed by and for the protection of a numerically insecure white settler population against an ethnically alien population with sophisticated networks of regional migration’.⁸ As will be seen, these legislative measures would have certain consequences for the Madeirans, an ‘undesirable’, poor white immigrant group as well.

It is necessary to give the background of the European language test or so-called ‘Natal Formula’, included in the 1897 legislation, because it had a direct impact on the formulation

⁵ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Split-Households’, 638.

⁶ Quoted in Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘The Passenger Indian as Worker: Indian Immigrants in Cape Town in the Early Twentieth Century’, *African Studies*, 68, 1, April 2009, 117.

⁷ Milton Shain, ‘Diamonds, Pogroms and Undesirables: Anti-alienism and Legislation in the Cape Colony, 1890-1906’, *South African Historical Journal*, 12, November 1980, 28.

⁸ Andrew MacDonald, ‘The Identity Thieves of the Indian Ocean: Forgery, Fraud and the Origins of South African Immigration Control, 1890s-1920s’ in K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter (eds), *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 254.

of the Cape Colony's immigration policies. The British Colonial Office was sympathetic towards the desire of the settler colonies to prevent the entry of people 'alien in civilization, alien in religion, alien in customs' into their midst.⁹ However, the British government would not sanction any legislation based on race or colour. To overcome this restriction, Natal opted for a literacy test to restrict immigration, which was an imperial first.¹⁰ It was inspired by the United States literacy test in 1890, used to limit the voting and citizenship rights of African-Americans.¹¹ The 'Natal Formula' was quickly adopted by other colonies within the British Empire. The most radical variant of the Natal model was adopted in Western Australia (Immigration Restriction Act of 1897). Immigration officers could choose which European language to use as a test. The Immigration Restriction Act (No. 17) of 1901 made this applicable throughout a federated Australia.¹² The Cape Colony followed suit in 1902.

Immigration Legislation and Documentation (1902-1939)

The Immigration Act of 1902 came into force on 30 January 1903 and was based largely on the anti-immigration Natal Act. This Cape Act was referred to as 'a very sketchy affair, but sufficient to serve as a temporary check'.¹³ The report on the working of the Act stated that, due to its hasty implementation, it was 'somewhat slight in structure and incomplete in working detail...'¹⁴ Despite its perceived inadequacies, its effects had far-reaching consequences. The primary aim of the Act was 'to restrict undesirable immigration', but it was not applicable to those persons already residing in the Colony.¹⁵ To gain entry into Cape ports and to become 'valuable additions' to the Colony's population, certain conditions had

⁹ Klotz, *Migration and National Identity in South Africa, 1860-2010*, 74-75.

¹⁰ Klaaren, *From Prohibited Immigrants to Citizens*, 52.

¹¹ Jeremy C. Martens, 'Pioneering the Dictation Test? The Creation and Administration of Western Australia's Immigration Restriction Act, 1897-1901', *Studies in Western Australian History*, 28, 2014, 52.

¹² Klotz, *Migration and National Identity in South Africa, 1860-2010*, 77.

¹³ Cousins Papers, *Reflections of a Nineteenth Century Immigrant*, 14.

¹⁴ G 63-1904, Cape of Good Hope, *Report of the Working of "The Immigration Act, 1902," for the year 1903* (Cape Town: Government Printers, 1904), 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

to be met: be able to write and sign in the characters of any European language¹⁶ and have 'visible means of support.'¹⁷ The literacy requirement effectively succeeded in keeping Indians out of the Colony. Yiddish was accepted as a European language four months after the promulgation of the Act.¹⁸ East Europeans simply had to ensure that they passed the test of writing in Yiddish and some did while others failed to do so.

The Immigration Act of 1902 applied to all nationalities and races, and the largely illiterate Madeirans were affected by the requirement of a language test. However, a stipulation in the Act served as a life-line to semi-skilled Europeans. It read as follows:

European persons who are agricultural or domestic servants, skilled artisans, mechanics, workmen or miners, and are able to produce a certificate signed by the Agent-General of the Colony in England or others appointed by the Governor in England or elsewhere to grant certificates for the purposes of the Act, certifying that the person named therein has been engaged to serve, immediately on arrival in the Colony, an employer therein of repute at an adequate remuneration and for a reasonable period of time.¹⁹

On arrival at the Cape ports, workmen who claimed exemption had to present to the Immigration Officers proof of a contractual engagement signed by a designated official. Madeiran fishermen, who will be discussed later, had contracts with fishing companies and this gave them access to the Colony. The wife and minor children (under 16 years) of a person permitted to enter the Colony, were exempted from the regulatory effects of the Act. This also applied to a domiciled Indian wishing to bring out his wife and children. Those Madeirans without a contractual agreement with a prospective employer, had to satisfy the requirements of the literacy test for entry into Cape Town.

In the first year after the 1902 Act came into effect, there were 962 prohibited immigrants, of which 64 were Portuguese, 38 of whom had departed from Madeira.²⁰ As the requirements of

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14. Initially £5, but later raised to £20.

¹⁸ Milton Shain, 'Diamonds, Pogroms and Undesirables', 18.

¹⁹ Section 3 (g).

²⁰ *Report of the Working of "The Immigration Act, 1902"*, 9.

the Act became known, the numbers of prohibited immigrants dropped. Although shipping companies took responsibility in ensuring that passengers complied with the law, Indians, Jews from Russia, Greeks, Spanish and Portuguese continued to be significant groups of the prohibited.²¹

There is evidence that Cousins used the literacy test to prevent Madeirans from entering Cape Town. He commented that ‘respectable persons in good health who were clearly European’, would have little difficulty in entering Cape Town.²² From the immigration files, cases were noted that the race of Madeirans were changed from ‘European’ to ‘Coloured’ on the passenger forms (see below).²³ It appeared that the Madeirans were specifically targeted for exclusion and perceived as borderline Europeans. This is reiterated in a letter dated 6 October 1910, in which Cousins made the following comment:

...[t]hese people [Madeirans] were scarcely to be regarded as Europeans. In this Province they would undoubtedly have classed with the ordinary coloured labourer, who in many respects would probably be regarded as a superior type. I may say that my experience here it has always been a mistake to admit the Madeiran natives, as they have invariably drifted into the Town and there connected themselves with the lowest type of coloured people, and followed occupations which frequently brought them into conflict with the Police. [...] I have never hinted to the Portuguese authorities that the question of colour was a consideration in such cases but have merely adhered to the view that the standard of education was insufficient.²⁴

The literacy test, which had originally been intended to prevent Indian migration to Cape Town, had been broadened to consider other unwanted individuals. The writing test continued to be a feature of immigration legislation well after 1913. The Act of 1913 applied nationally to the newly formed Union of South Africa. As the passenger arrival forms feature

²¹ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘The Desirable and the Undesirable in the life of the Chief Immigration Officer in Cape Town, Clarence Wilfred Cousins, 1905-1915’, *Itinerario*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2018, 59.

²² Letter dated 12 November 1913 and signed by Cousins. PIO 26, 2772e. File of Francisco Gonçalves.

²³ See WCA: PIO 15, 1948e (Manuel Nunes, Manuel Ferreira and José Netto), 1913.

²⁴ WCA: PIO 15, 1948e. Cousins to the CIO Pretoria, 6 October 1910.

in the administration of the literacy test, it will first be considered before returning to the literacy tests.

Every passenger entering the Cape ports was required to complete a passenger arrival form, except for a wife accompanying her husband and minor children. Cousins amended the passenger arrival form in 1906, creating a standard form, the 'Declaration by Passenger' and later renamed the 'Passenger's Declaration Form' (D.I.10). This form, which survived into the 1960s with some amendments, consisted of sixteen questions.²⁵ From the answers to the questions, the immigration official would determine whether the passenger was qualified to enter the Cape ports. From the Madeiran immigration files, there is no significant evidence that the veracity of the answers to the questions were ever doubted. Indians were regarded with suspicion, especially regarding the relationship and ages of 'children' accompanying their 'father' and were rigorously interrogated.²⁶ This issue will be elaborated upon later in the chapter. After 1911, the thumbprints on passenger forms completed by Indians were mandatory,²⁷ whereas only Madeirans who could not sign their name were required to provide their thumbprints. The passenger arrival form was used to compile an archive of those entering the ports and initially was the document used to test the literacy levels of those seeking entry.

Although there has been no detailed study of how the literacy test was administered in Cape Town, a search through Madeiran immigration files, as will be shown, provided a few clues. The earliest tests of Madeirans which the writer could find were in the late 1930s and 1940s. In the earlier years, language tests of other nationalities gave an indication of its application. The tests were simple, no longer than a few sentences written on the back of the passenger

²⁵ The questions included full names, port of embarkation and intended embarkation, age, reason for coming to South Africa, period of previous residence in South Africa, occupation, ability to write in a European language, any criminal convictions and suffering from any infectious diseases.

²⁶ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'False Fathers and False Sons', 117.

²⁷ Between 1906 and 1911 thumbprints of Indians were not enforced.

form as an application to enter Cape Town. The passenger seeking entry could choose what to write. Cousins had the authority to decide what was a suitable standard of writing.²⁸

Decisions could be subjective, because the writing was acceptable, but the person regarded as ‘undesirable in appearance’ and refused entry. In the case of Europeans, the literacy test was applied leniently and used as a pretext to exclude the ‘undesirables’. This is indicated by the Secretary of the Interior of the Union of South Africa when he instructed the Principal Immigration Officers on 30 July 1913 as follows:

[I]t is not the policy of the Government to apply the Education Test [...] rigorously in the case of Europeans. Europeans who appear to be desirable persons, notwithstanding the fact that they may be unable to read or write, or that they are not possessed of means, should not be restricted unless it appears practically certain that by allowing them to enter they would become a public charge. The Education Test should be brought into operation only in the case of Europeans who are obviously undesirable.²⁹

For Indians, there was no leniency in the application of the literacy test. From 1913, further immigration of Indians to South Africa was prohibited (excepting for the wives and minor children of those Indians legally in the Union), irrespective of literacy and socio-economic class. The literacy test now lost its relevance in the history of Indian immigration.

From the Madeiran immigration files, it became apparent that over time certain changes in the administration of the literacy test took place. The passenger could no longer decide what to write, but had to write a dictated test in Portuguese, which was lengthier than previously.

(See Figure 1.) The English translation reads as follows:

There was a father who had seven sons. When he was about to die, he called them to his bedside and said the following: Sons, I know I cannot live much longer but before dying I want each of you to go to the vineyard and bring a dry piece of vine stock to me. The youngest asked if he had to do it too. He was only four years old. The eldest one was thirty-five years old and very responsible. He was also the

²⁸ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Betwixt the Oceans: The Chief Immigration Officer in Cape Town, Clarence Wilfred Cousins (1905-1915)’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 42, No. 3, 2016, 474.

²⁹ Quoted in Klaaren, *From Prohibited Immigrants to Citizens*, 105.

strongest in the parish. You too, said the father to the youngest son. All seven went and a while later they returned with the pieces of dry vine stock.³⁰

On the test paper, the Chancellor of the Portuguese Consulate wrote: ‘Tested by me and found proficient in the Portuguese language’. The Portuguese authorities therefore played a

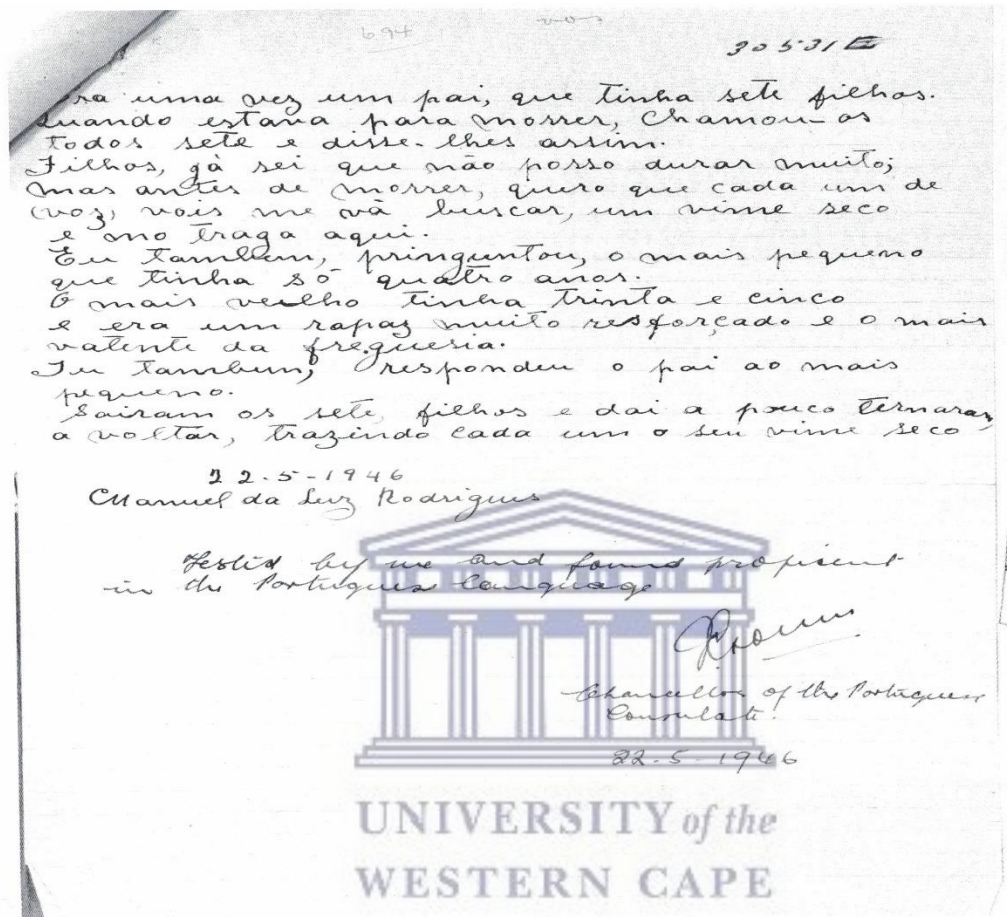


Figure 1: Literacy test of Manuel da Luz Rodrigues, 1946. WCA: PIO 694, 30531e.

role in determining who satisfied the requirements of the test.

Different tests were not necessarily used for each applicant. The above dictated test was given to two other Madeirans on the same date and the comments were the same on both test papers: ‘Tested and I consider he has good knowledge of the Portuguese language’ and signed by the Chancellor of the Portuguese Consulate.³¹ The same test was given on 27 June

³⁰ WCA: PIO 694, 30531e. File of Manuel da Luz Rodrigues.

³¹ WCA: PIO 670, 29632e. File of José de Quintal.

1939³² and again on 29 June 1939.³³ In another case, the English version was written first, followed by the Portuguese in a different handwriting. Does this indicate that it was not a dictated test, but a translation from English to Portuguese?³⁴ Also, the language test was at times written on the back of the original passenger arrival form, but examples of this regarding Madeirans were not found in the immigration records. Only comments written on the front of the form were found. Comments included the following: ‘Test on back (in Portuguese) passed’³⁵ and ‘Educational Test on back. Writes without hesitation’.³⁶

The literacy test was not always done on landing at the port. On the Passenger’s Declaration Form of José Geral dated 2 April 1934, it stated ‘to be examined when interpreter available’. In a letter dated 22 August 1934, the Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs resolved the admission of Geral by specifying that he was ‘now satisfied of his ability to comply with Section 4(1)(b) [literacy requirement] of Act 22 of 1913 and has been released from the conditions of his Temporary Permit’.³⁷ It took over six months after landing to finalise the literacy test requirement.

The thought of undergoing the literacy test also caused emotional stress. Manuel Rodrigues Jardim claimed that he had passed an education test given by the British Agent at Lourenço Marques in 1919 before he first entered the Union. Now 21 years later (1940), he was ‘too shaky to sit for a test’.³⁸ The administration of the language test revealed ‘that race, appearance, class and pressure groups played a role in who passed the test and who did not’.³⁹

³² WCA: PIO 325, 16999e. File of Antonio Pereira Nunes.

³³ WCA: PIO 327, 17051e. File of Manuel Vicente Rebelo.

³⁴ WCA: PIO 405, 19048e. File of José Nunes. Literacy test dated 11 November 1940.

³⁵ WCA: PIO 147, 10253e. File of José Fernandes, 12 February 1937.

³⁶ WCA: PIO 331, 17240e. File of Manuel da Silva, 13 July 1939.

³⁷ WCA: PIO 91, 6800e. File of José Geral.

³⁸ WCA: PIO 405, 19052e. File of Manuel Jardim.

³⁹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Betwixt the Oceans’, 476.

Although the Immigration Act of 1902 limited immigration opportunities, the colonial authorities recognised the rights of those Indians and Madeirans already in the colony. They

Immigration Act, Form No. 14.
(Revised March, 1905.)

"IMMIGRATION ACT, 1902."

COLONY OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

CERTIFICATE OF DOMICILE.

This is to certify that Manuel da Silva
residing at 54 Buitenkop Street, Cape Town who
has this day appeared before me and who desires that (1).....
..... may be allowed to enter the
Colony at the Port or place of (2).....
on or about the..... 1907, has satisfied the
Officer Administering the Act that he is a person duly domiciled
in (3)..... South Africa within the
meaning of the provisions of Section 3, sub-clause (f) of the
"Immigration Act, 1902."

Issued by me this..... 17 day of..... Feb..... 1906
at Cape Town

O. B. Bous
Resident Magistrate.

Description: Wife.
Name..... Age.....
Race..... Means of identification.....

Minor Children:

NAME.	Age.	Sex.	Means of identification.
1.....			
2.....			
3.....			

Means of identification of M. da Silva

Signature:.....
Manuel da Silva

Sex: M. Race: Portuguese Age, actual or
apparent..... Place of Birth: Madeira
Profession, Trade or Occupation: Handyman
Distinguishing marks (4): Scar on back of hand
5 ft 7 in or right hand

2. Here insert whether it is desired that he, his wife, or his minor child or children shall be allowed to
3. Here insert the Colony or State in South Africa where the holder of the Certificate is domiciled.
4. To be furnished in the case of Asiatics and Europeans the holder must satisfy the Officer Administering the Act that he can be obtained by lightly inking the ball of the right hand with a blue ink stamp, and then pressing it lightly on the paper in the appropriate square.

C.F.L.D. - 17021

Figure 2: Domicile Certificate. WCA: PIO 2, 471e. File of Manuel da Silva

would mostly be unable to meet the requirements of the new Act when they sought to re-enter after a temporary absence, such as visits to India and Madeira. To overcome this obstacle, such individuals had to acquire a domicile certificate, which ensured rights to be in the colony and cross-border movement. (See Figure 2.)

From the certificate, certain aspects are noticeable. Although da Silva, a Madeiran, signed his name, left and right thumbprints were still required. Distinguishing marks are also mentioned, but no photograph was required. This differed from other whites, because for them, fingerprints and a physical description were not required. Photographs, physical descriptions and thumbprints were mandatory for Indians. Madeirans therefore came the closest in their treatment to Indians in that their domicile certificates bore fingerprints and physical descriptions, although no photographs.⁴⁰

The Immigration Act of 1906 marked the introduction of an elaborate permit system, which allowed an absence of twelve months from the colony for those needing to leave temporarily. In the case of Manuel Jardim, his permit dated 5 June 1913, stated that he ‘will be allowed to re-enter the Cape Colony on production of this Permit at Cape Town within a period of twelve months from the date hereof, and on satisfying the Examining Immigration Officer as to his identity’. Jardim’s thumbprints appear on the permit, as he could not sign his name. The space for a physical description was left blank. No photograph was affixed to the permit.⁴¹ In the case of Manuel Freitas, his permit included a general description,⁴² which points to the inconsistency of the immigration officers in completing permits. The permit for Indians requested the same details, with the exception that a photograph was required (as already mentioned, thumbprints were mandatory after 1911). Also, the physical description on the permit was required.⁴³ Therefore, unlike Indians, for Madeirans a physical description and a photograph were not mandatory and thumbprints were only necessary in the case of illiteracy.

⁴⁰ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘False Fathers and False Sons’, 106.

⁴¹ WCA: PIO 20, 2645e. File of Manuel Sardinha Jardim.

⁴² WCA: PIO 20, 2451e. File of Manuel Freitas. Permit dated 11 May 1912. General Description: Pointed nose. Small scar over left eye. Scar on little finger left hand.

⁴³ There could have been inconsistencies regarding Indians as well, but it appears as if a photograph was a mandatory feature on the permits issued in terms of the 1906 Act.

In terms of the Immigrants Regulation Act of 1913, the permit was renamed the certificate of identity and allowed absence from the country to a maximum of three years. These certificates, as in the case of domicile certificates and permits, were not automatically granted, but an application had to be made. In the case of Antonio de Sa, the immigration authorities wrote on his application dated 26 July 1913, that ‘de Sa is one of the leading Portuguese here and is a very desirable sort’.⁴⁴ There is no evidence from the immigration files that permits/certificates were denied to Madeirans to the extent that Indians were affected. Indians were regularly denied permits/certificates, which implied they could remain in the colony or leave for India with no possibility of legal return. The permit system led to a decrease in the size of the Cape Indian population from 10,242 in 1904 to 6,606 in 1911.⁴⁵

Like the permit, the certificate of identity was a sought-after document, because it ensured that those lawfully in the Union the right of return within a specified period. The certificate gave peace of mind to those ‘apprehensive that he will be unable to prove on his return that he is not a prohibited immigrant’.⁴⁶ Klaaren makes the comment that these re-entry certificates were used mostly by the Asian community.⁴⁷ However, Madeirans also found it prudent to apply for these certificates on their visits to Madeira, because of their high illiteracy rate. Without the certificate, they were subject to the normal requirements of the Act, which included the literacy test. The certificate of identity of John Gonsalves (sic) contrasts in certain aspects from those of Indians. (See Figure 3.)

⁴⁴ WCA: PIO 24, 2671e. File of Antonio de Sa. Application dated 26 July 1913.

⁴⁵ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Cat and Mouse Games’, 188.

⁴⁶ Section 25(2) of Act.

⁴⁷ Klaaren, *From Prohibited Immigrants to Citizens*, 83.

No. 2091

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.
"The Immigrants Regulation Act, 1913."

2939 E
CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY.

For: *John Gonsalves* (2/6)


It is certified that *John Gonsalves* having appeared before *Immigration Officer* at *Cape Town* for the purpose of supplying the means of identification which are now specified herein, and having intimated that he is about to absent himself from the Province of **CAPE OF GOOD HOPE**, for a period of *Twelve Months* on a visit to *Madeira*, this document is issued to the said *John Gonsalves* and, subject to the conditions enumerated below, and to the verification of the marks of identification, will be accepted by the examining Immigration Officer without further evidence as proof of the identity of the said *John Gonsalves* on his return.

(Date Stamp: **UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA**, **IMMIGRATION OFFICE**, **9 APR 1915**)

A. Davina
Immigration Officer in Charge.

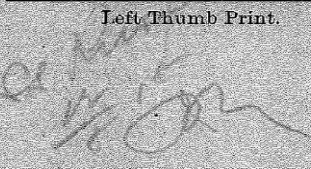
CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THIS CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED:

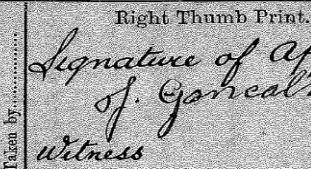
1. That on the return of the person named herein to the Province of **CAPE OF GOOD HOPE**, this Certificate shall be surrendered to the examining Immigration Officer.
2. That if the person referred to herein seeks to re-enter the Province of **CAPE OF GOOD HOPE** after a period of one year has elapsed from the date hereof, the protection afforded by this Certificate shall be deemed to have lapsed, and he shall be required to satisfy the requirements of the Act.
3. This Certificate may be held to be invalidated if the person named herein is shown to the Immigration Officer to have made a false declaration in a material point when applying for a Certificate.

Age *39* Sex *Male* Photograph 

Nationality *Portuguese*

General Description *WESTERN CAPE*

Left Thumb Print 

Right Thumb Print 

Signature of Applicant *John Gonsalves*

Witness *A. Davina*

Figure 3: Certificate of Identity. Immigrants Regulation Act, 1913. WCA: PIO 28, 2939e. File of John Gonsalves (sic).

For Indians, thumbprints, physical descriptions and photographs were mandatory. In the case of Gonsalves (sic), no thumbprints were required, because he was able to sign his name.

Also, a physical description was not required. However, in the case of Madeirans there were

inconsistencies in the completion of the certificate. Some certificates did not have photographs⁴⁸ and others had physical descriptions. In the case of João D'Agrella, he was described as 'Well-built. Broad nose. Large ears'.⁴⁹ Like the descriptions of Indians, the comments could be uncomplimentary and hurtful. In the case of John de Coito, his certificate only had a photograph, with no thumb-prints or general description.⁵⁰ A certificate dated 13 July 1939, had a photograph and a signature, but no general description.⁵¹

The permits/certificates mentioned above ensured uncomplicated re-entry into the Cape, but section 25(2) of the Act made provision for temporary permits to any prohibited immigrant to enter the Union. This was mainly used to finalise administrative matters such as waiting for a decision regarding permanent residence. For the Madeirans, the temporary permit was an important document, because it gave them the right to remain temporarily in the Union and pursue their fishing activities. The fishing companies had the onerous administrative burden of annually renewing the temporary permits of their Madeiran employees,⁵² which could be renewed on a continuous basis. Temporary permits were also granted to Indians. MacDonald argues that the temporary permit was a compromise, because although migrants gained right of entry for a certain time, it conferred no permanent rights of citizenship.⁵³

Both Indians and Madeirans lawfully in the country could bring out their legal wife and minor children, but different documentary paths were followed. For Madeirans, nothing more than a valid marriage certificate and an immigration permit was required.⁵⁴ For Indian wives,

⁴⁸ See WCA: PIO 20, 2467e. File of John de Andrade. Certificate dated 21 April 1914 and WCA: PIO 24, 2640e. File of João D'Agrella. Certificate dated 26 June 1914.

⁴⁹ WCA: PIO 24, 2640e. File of João D'Agrella. See also WCA: PIO 24, 2644e. File of José Teixeira. His general description was detailed as 'Well-built. Mole below right ear'. Certificate dated 7 November 1913.

⁵⁰ WCA: PIO28, 2886e. File of John de Coito. Certificate dated 11 July 1914.

⁵¹ WCA: PIO 331, 17233e. File of Luiz Gregoris dos Santos.

⁵² See for example WCA: PIO 1986, 87104e. File of Manuel Figueira and WCA: PIO 1991, 87276e. File of Vasco Gomes de Faria.

⁵³ MacDonald, 'Colonial Trespassers', 160.

⁵⁴ Marriage by proxy (see chapter two) ensured the easy passage of Madeiran wives into the country. This was also mentioned in an interview with Manuel Alves on 25 April 2018.

a long documentary process was followed. Initially, Indian wives entered without difficulty, but from 1918 application forms to introduce wives from India became necessary. From the 1920s a DI 91 certificate became mandatory. The husband in Cape Town first completed a DI 90 form, which required details of his marriages, children from these marriages and dates of birth. If approved, the DI 91 certificate was sent to India for completion by the district magistrate, who had to investigate the family details. This entailed oral testimony from villagers about details on the DI 91.⁵⁵ There is no evidence from the immigration files that Madeirans had to complete a DI 91 certificate. The rigorous documentary process for Indian wives was to ensure that only one wife secured entry. Madeirans did not practice polygamy and therefore a more lenient entry procedure was followed.

The intent of the documents which have been mentioned was to control and restrict movement. James Scott argues that the modern state is motivated by a desire to make society legible (control of citizens). An illegible society 'is a hinderance to any effective intervention by the state, whether the purpose of that intervention is plunder or public welfare'.⁵⁶ However, as already mentioned, registration also conferred rights on the citizenry of a country, which for the Madeirans, gave them the right to remain in the country, to take up employment and to own property.

After Indians were prohibited from entering the Union, they became unimportant in future immigration legislation. The focus now shifted solely to European immigration. Madeirans, not being British, became subject to quotas, and they had to apply for permanent residence and naturalisation like any other foreign nationals.

⁵⁵ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Split-Households', 646 and 648.

⁵⁶ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 78.

MacDonald remarks that during the 1930s, ‘nationalist momentum started to nudge out lingering liberal sentiment’.⁵⁷ During this decade, three important immigration legislations were passed. The Immigration Quota Act 8 of 1930 Act made a distinction between people emigrating from scheduled (‘desirable’) and unscheduled (‘undesirable’) countries. Immigrants from scheduled countries could immigrate as they had always done (subject to the 1913 Immigrants Regulation Act), but those coming from unscheduled countries were restricted to a maximum of fifty persons per year. A further one thousand places were allocated annually to people from unscheduled countries. Quota immigrants were required to be of good character and likely to become readily assimilated with the (white) inhabitants of the Union within a reasonable time.

Although the Quota Act was essentially a means to curtail Jewish immigration, since they were regarded as an ‘unassimilable race’, despite being European, it also applied to the Madeirans. The government made every endeavour to ensure that potential immigrants added quality to the white population and would ‘maintain its standard of civilisation.’⁵⁸ Although Portugal was a scheduled country, it is not clear from the literature whether Madeira was also regarded as a scheduled territory. Even if it was, Madeiran entry into Cape Town was still restricted by the 1913 Act, with its literacy requirement.

The Aliens Act 1 of 1937, which came into operation on 1 February 1937, made provision for the establishment of an Immigrants Selection Board, ‘for the purpose of selecting such alien immigrants as desire to enter the Union for permanent residence therein’.⁵⁹ The board had the discretion to issue a permit for permanent residence to those whom it regarded as a ‘desirable’ immigrant i.e. of good character and likely to become readily assimilated with the

⁵⁷ MacDonald, ‘Colonial Trespassers’, 39.

⁵⁸ Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants*, 76.

⁵⁹ Section 3 (1).

European inhabitants of the Union.⁶⁰ Peberdy remarks that ‘the language that swirled around the passage of the 1937 Aliens Act crystallised around the issue of ‘assimilability’.⁶¹ She further comments that Eric Louw, the main designer of the Act, stated that individuals who identified with the white population of the Union would be acceptable as immigrants. For Louw, the Portuguese (Madeirans) ‘were questionable’, but could be assimilated if they were ‘from good “stock”’.⁶² From these remarks, the Immigrants Selection Board was unlikely to be sympathetic towards applicants from Madeira, except those needed in the fishing industry. Glaser mentions that only 30-200 Madeirans managed to become legal residents in South Africa during the 1920s and 1930s.⁶³ However, as will be shown below, Madeirans were able to secure the approval of the Immigrants Selection Board when applying for permanent residence. This Act also stipulated that immigrants required a ‘pre-embarkation permit’ before their departure to South Africa. This was a means to stop ‘undesirables’ from entering the country at its source. Entrants, after they obtained an aliens registration certificate, were issued with an identification card, bearing their photograph and signature.⁶⁴

The application form (D.I. 141) for permanent residency was a bulky document consisting of twenty-five questions with nine attachments (four photographs, birth, marriage, medical, police and educational certificates, proof of financial position, employer’s report and certificates of character). Madeiran wives and children, including minors, entering to join their husbands/ fathers legally settled in the Union, were also required to have the application form completed. This was done at the British Consulate in Funchal.⁶⁵ Before an application

⁶⁰ Sec. 4 (3) (b). Unlike the Quota Act, the Aliens Act specified ‘European inhabitants’ instead of ‘inhabitants’.

⁶¹ Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants*, 77.

⁶² *Ibid*, 79.

⁶³ Glaser, ‘White But Illegal’, 79.

⁶⁴ See WCA: PIO 152, 10465e. File of João da Silva. Identification card dated December 1938.

⁶⁵ See WCA: PIO 403, 18976e. File of Manuel Vasconcelos. Applications were completed for the wife (Maria) and two minor children (Manuel, 12 years and Maria, 14 years). The applications were dated 1 March 1949. See also WCA: PIO 853, 36792e. File of Rosa de Freitas Ferreira. Application dated 1947. WCA: PIO 853, 36809e. File of Maria Doria. Application dated 4 February 1947.

for permanent residence was submitted to the Selection Board, an applicant had to be interviewed by an immigration official. From the immigration files, only comments from the mid-1950s and 1960s could be found. These comments will be referred to in the next section. If the application for permanent residency was not successful, the Immigrants Selection Board bluntly stated that the application had been rejected and that the person must leave the Union before the expiry date of their Aliens Temporary Permit. No reasons for the rejection were provided. An opportunity was given for the applicant to appeal the decision.

The rejection of the application of Lourentino Rodriques to remain in the Union after 4 July 1950, prompted the managing director, S.H. Jeffrey, of the fishing company, South West Africa Fishing Industries Ltd., to write a letter of appeal addressed to the Department of the Interior on behalf of Rodriques. In the letter, Jeffrey refers to Rodriques as ‘very competent’ as a fisherman and both ‘hardworking and respectable’. Furthermore, he referred to the inability of the company to recruit sufficient, competent fishermen to meet the demands of the expanding fishing industry. He further regarded it as important to recruit more fishermen from Madeira in order ‘to keep the boats working’ until the South Africans could be trained to undertake fishing duties.⁶⁶ On reconsideration, the permanent residence of Rodriques was approved by the Immigrants Selection Board in November 1950.

In another letter dated 30 August 1960, S.A. Sea Products Ltd wrote in the same vein, stating that it was essential to retain as many experienced and reliable fishermen as possible, to enable the firm to operate their vessels in order to fulfil their export commitments.⁶⁷ From these letters it is clear that Madeiran fishermen were highly respected and sought after and even necessary for the survival of the South African fishing industry.⁶⁸ From the archival

⁶⁶ WCA: PIO 860, 37073e. File of Lourentino Rodriques. Letter dated 7 June 1950 addresses to the Department of the Interior, Pretoria.

⁶⁷ PIO 2263, 81993e. File of Heliodoro da Silva.

⁶⁸ See *Cape Times*, 19 July 1951, 3.

records, it appeared that the Selection Board was hesitant to reject an application for permanent residency when motivated for by a large fishing company. Madeiran fishermen were necessary to fill the company's vacancies, especially when the local fishermen started moving from Lüderitz Bay to Walvis and St Helena Bay to trawl for pilchards in the early 1950s.

In terms of Section 8 (1) of the Act, the occupation stated in the application for a permit could not be changed without the permission of the Minister. Although this applied to all aliens, the implementation of this legal stipulation does give a peak into family feuds and uncertainties experienced by Madeirans in a new country. For those who changed their occupation without permission, they were instructed to appear before the Principal Immigration Officer for an interview to explain themselves. The narrative of Manuel de Agrela, told through an interpreter on 5 August 1949, reads as follows:

After his arrival in the Union he worked for three weeks on a farm [Derdepoort in the Pretoria District] rented by his father, who used to come home in an intoxicated condition. His father ill-treated him and on several occasions threatened to shoot him. He could not stand it any longer and when Manuel Correia, proprietor [sic] of the Good Hope Café, 152 Longmarket Street, Cape Town, who is a friend of his, offered him employment [as a café assistant] he gladly accepted. He was quite ignorant of the fact that he had to apply for permission to change his occupation. This was never explained to him. He would appreciate it very much if he could be given a chance to put in an application for permission to continue in this employment.⁶⁹

The immigration file ends when de Agrela was reconciled with his father and returned to work on the farm as a market-gardener. He presumably could not change his occupation as requested.

In another case, Antonio Teixeira arrived in the Union on 23 June 1962 and worked as a fisherman but owing to sea sickness, he changed his occupation to tram driver and worked for the City Tramways at a salary of £23 a month. He was unaware that he had to get permission

⁶⁹ WCA: PIO 853, 36781e. File of Manuel de Agrela.

to change his occupation. The immigration officials would not consider his case until they received a medical certificate stating that he was incapable of working as a fisherman.⁷⁰

Teixeira could not continue his employment as a tram driver until this request was met. The immigration file ends here, but Teixeira must have felt anxiety about his inability to care for his family and his uncertain future in the country.

Progressing from a permanent residence permit holder to a British national (prior to 1961), necessitated applying for a certificate of naturalisation after at least five years of residency. Klaaren observes that there was no advantage to acquire British nationality other than to gain right of movement within the Commonwealth.⁷¹ Although the pioneer Madeirans enjoyed permanent residency in the country, only a few of them were eager to seek formal citizenship, because ‘although they made their wealth here, their loyalty was still with Madeira’.⁷²

The Aliens Registration Act, 1939, which sought to record all immigrants within the country, stipulated that an immigrant entering the Union had to apply for a registration certificate within fourteen days of landing. Hotel owners and employers were legally compelled to keep record of all foreigners on their books. Failure to register was a serious offence. In the case of José dos Reis de Freitas, he was fined £10 or two months hard labour on 17 August 1946 for not registering.⁷³

This section has pointed out that both Madeirans and Indians were regarded as ‘undesirable’ immigrants and faced restrictions on entering the ports. However, from 1913, Indians were totally prohibited from entering, whereas the Madeirans never faced such prohibition. From then onwards, immigration revolved around the immigration of Europeans. The next section

⁷⁰ PIO 1991, 87278e. File of Antonio Teixeira.

⁷¹ Klaaren, *From Prohibited Immigrants to Citizens*, 200. See also the British Nationality in the Union and Naturalization and Status of Aliens Act 18 of 1923 and the South African Citizenship Act 44 of 1949.

⁷² Interview with Connie de Souza on 10 October 2017.

⁷³ WCA: PIO 488, 36117e. File of José dos Reis de Freitas.

will elaborate on the vacillating immigration policies from 1948. The Madeirans were welcomed ‘with open arms’ during the 1960s, but after that, their fortunes began to wane.

National Party Immigration Policy (1948-1970s)

The post-war inclusive immigration policy of the Smuts government (United Party) was based on economic reconstruction in the Union. For this to take place, immigrants with the needed skills had to be recruited. A further consideration was that increased immigration would add to the white population. From 1945 to 1948 over 85% of immigrants to South Africa were British.⁷⁴ The victory of the National Party in the 1948 election resulted in a selective immigration policy, based on the thinking of Afrikaner nationalism.

In August 1948 the government outlined the main aims of its new immigration policy. In essence, these were ‘concerned with protecting the white population and nation from various perceived threats posed by immigrants’.⁷⁵ Donsky argues that during the period 1949 to 1960, South Africa’s immigration policy was not guided by economic necessity, but rather by ideological considerations.⁷⁶ Its essential aim was to allow potential immigrants who would fit ‘the national pattern and way of life’ and who could contribute to the country’s ‘spiritual development’.⁷⁷ Madeirans were not considered suitable immigrants to meet these criteria.

Throughout the 1950s, the economy was growing rapidly and there was a demand for skilled, white workers. New measures were introduced in recruiting skilled Dutch, Belgium and German immigrants, who would be able to assimilate more readily into white, Afrikaner society. The number of immigrants from these selected countries was less than expected and the shortage of white labour impeded economic growth. The Nationalist government had to

⁷⁴ Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants*, 88 -91

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁷⁶ Isidore Donsky, ‘Aspects of the Immigration of Europeans to South Africa 1946- 1970’ (MA thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, 1989), 11.

⁷⁷ Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants*, 100.

decide whether to lift the skills colour bar or to follow a less selective immigration policy.

The latter option was chosen.

The period from 1961 to 1970 was marked by a changed attitude towards immigration. The government was prepared to accept 30,000 immigrants per year, irrespective of their religious or cultural background. Even potential white immigrants, who were previously regarded as unsuitable, including Madeirans, were now welcome.⁷⁸ This changed attitude, which already manifested itself in the mid- 1950s, can be seen from the comments of the immigration officers when two Madeirans applied for permanent residence in 1956: ‘neither applicant can speak or understand English or Afrikaans, but they appear to be pleasant people and, should not have difficulty in assimilating with the European population of the Union’.⁷⁹ Another application in 1961 carried the comment: ‘maak ‘n baie goeie indruk. Is baie lig van vel’ (‘makes a very good impression. Is very light in colour’)⁸⁰ and ‘in contrast with the normal run of Portuguese, he is light complexioned and has fair hair. He is in all respects assimilable with the European population and has the makings of a good citizen.’⁸¹ From these comments, immigration officials were focused on colour. João Rebelo’s application focussed on his character: ‘Well- spoken and polite. Appears to be a hard worker. Desirable type of immigrant’.⁸² A common thread runs through these comments: the aspects of appearance and assimilability – the potential to become part of the white nation. For this reason and out of necessity, they were welcomed into the country. This more inclusive immigration policy would be short-lived.

⁷⁸ Donsky, ‘Aspects of the Immigration of Europeans to South Africa 1946- 1970’, 27.

⁷⁹ WCA: PIO 1744, 76788e. File of Manuel Gomes Languera and wife Maria, 1956

⁸⁰ WCA: PIO 326, 17046e. File of Mercedes de Jesus do Rego, 1961.

⁸¹ WCA: PIO 2210, 96094e. File of Fernando Ribeiro, 1961.

⁸² WCA: PIO 1362, 59249e. File of João Gomes Rebelo, 1961.

By the end of the 1960s immigrant selection became based largely on religious criteria, excluding those potential immigrants who did not adhere to the Calvinist religious tradition.⁸³ Already in October 1966 the Minister of Immigration instructed that stricter control measures be implemented over ‘certain types of immigrants’. This implied Catholics from Southern Europe (and Madeira) and other non-Protestants. This new turn of events was instigated by prominent Afrikaner political and religious figures. In 1969, Dr C. P. Mulder, the Minister of Information and of Immigration, stated that everything will be done in their power to ensure ‘that the “balance” of Protestants to Catholics remains undisturbed’.⁸⁴ From this statement it is clear that if this ‘balance’ was to be maintained, the number of Catholics entering the country would be strictly monitored. Applications from Portuguese and Italian people (traditionally Catholic) with more than three children had to be referred to the head office in Pretoria. Immigration officers were later instructed to turn down applicants from Madeira. Because of this intensive selection process, arrivals from Madeira declined from 606 in 1966 to 45 in 1973 and never recovered in the 1970s.⁸⁵

Illegal Entry into South Africa

With exclusions and documentary systems, fraud and illegal immigration are major and inevitable parts of immigration histories. Dhupelia-Mesthrie has dealt with illegal Indian immigration into the Cape ports. She shows the illegal strategies that were employed by Indians to obtain the permit/certificate and thereby ensuring a place for themselves in the Cape.⁸⁶ Also, she deals with documents verifying minor sons from India.⁸⁷ The works of

⁸³ Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants*, 125-126.

⁸⁴ *The Southern Cross Newspaper*, 27 August 1969, 8.

⁸⁵ Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants*, 127.

⁸⁶ See Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Cat and Mouse Games’, 185-202 and Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Engaging with the Bureaucracy’, 180-198.

⁸⁷ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘False Fathers and False Sons’, 99-132.

Glaser⁸⁸ and MacDonald⁸⁹ are Johannesburg-based, focusing on illegal immigration through Mozambique. This section will draw on these and other works, but will focus primarily on illegal Madeiran immigration at the Cape ports. A comparison will be made with illegal Indian immigration.

Indians feature prominently in the use of fraudulent means to obtain a permit/certificate, which would enable them to enter the Cape as documented persons. During the administration of Cousins, the immigration department appointed Indian interpreters on a casual basis. They were also employed as immigration agents by Indians. They played an important part in weakening the immigration department by their fraudulent actions. Blank permit forms were sold to agents, which resulted in a market in permit forms to develop. The agents admitted passengers who had never been in the Cape before by providing false biographical details and references to Indians.⁹⁰ The complicity of senior clerks within the department, such as William van Rheede van Oudtshoorn, enabled this fraud to flourish within the department. In the ensuing investigation into these corrupt practices, no mention was made of Madeiran involvement.

The falsification of documents regarding the relationship and ages of minor 'sons' wishing to enter Cape Town to join their resident 'fathers' was a persistent problem for the immigration officials. There was always the possibility that the 'sons' were brothers or nephews. Sworn statements from India regarding relationship and age were accepted, but were distrusted by immigration officials in Cape Town, as they were easy to falsify. The port officials used all possible means to disprove relationships and minority status, even resorting to medical evidence in determining age.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Glaser, 'White But Illegal', 74-98.

⁸⁹ See MacDonald, 'Forging the Frontiers', 154-177 and MacDonald, 'Colonial Trespassers', 51-121.

⁹⁰ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Engaging with the Bureaucracy', 181, 185-186 and 190.

⁹¹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'False Fathers and False Sons', 108-132.

Obtaining a fraudulent permit/document was only one way of entering the Cape ports. Indians were versatile in devising illegal methods of entry. Usurpation of other individuals' identity was a frequent practice, if these individuals had permanently left the Cape or were known to have died in India.⁹² Furthermore, individuals fabricated stories that they had been in Cape Town from 1901 to December 1906 and had left without a permit. Their business partners in Cape Town applied on their behalf for their re-entry. Immigration officers questioned the individual from India at the port to determine whether his details were correct as stated on the application form.⁹³ Some managed to enter through their lies and deceit, while others were not so successful.

Unlike the Indians, there is no significant evidence to demonstrate that Madeirans made use of fraudulent documents to enter the Cape ports. Madeirans sought to elude the paper systems at the Cape ports by being a stowaway or by 'jumping ship.' Despite more stringent surveillance controls at the Cape Town port after the formation of the Union in 1910, 'jumping ship' did not cease, but took place on a smaller scale. The following narratives serve to relate the experiences of Madeirans who opted for this means of illegal entry.

Accused stated that he went on board because he had been promised work. Accused was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment with hard labour. At the end of that time he will be taken on board the "Johannesburg" and restored to his sorrowing relatives in the beautiful isle, 'where every prospect pleases and only man is vile'.⁹⁴

This extract is taken from the court case of José Quam, who left Madeira as a stowaway on 18 October 1903. This is one of the earliest cases found in the immigration files and it was the only one where the stowaway was found on the ship.

⁹² Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Cat and Mouse Games', 195.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁹⁴ *Eastern Province Herald* dated 14 November 1903, found in WCA: PIO 8, 1268e. File of José Quam.

The following two cases took place after 1917, when the reform of the Immigration Department made it increasingly difficult to illegally enter the ports. In the first case, João Correia related that he left Madeira on 18 December 1943 on the s.s. “Colonial” and entered Lourenço Marques for permanent residence. He worked on a farm for nine months. During this time, he met a Mr. Serrão, a resident of the Union. Correia pleaded with Serrão to take him to Cape Town, where his father-in-law had work for him. Serrão was returning to Cape Town by boat and agreed to take Correia with him, and hide him on the boat, provided that all expenses were paid back to him. Correia further explained his experience through an interpreter on 8 October 1946:

I had to go right down in the hold and I had to stay there all the time – four days. I was not given any food or water. When we arrived in Cape Town, Mr Serrão called me in the hold and told me that we were in Cape Town. I then went on deck. Crates of bananas were being off-loaded from the ship into a rowing boat. The ship dropped anchor and was still in the Bay. I was then concealed amongst the banana crates and lowered with the crane into the small boat. The small boat was then rowed with oars to a jetty. I then went ashore and also Mr Serrão. From the jetty we walked along the road. We were not stopped by any officials. Mr Serrão and myself continued walking until we got to the place of my father-in-law. We had nothing in the way of luggage with us. I explained to my father-in-law that I had no authority to come to the Union. I then started to work in my father-in-law's café.⁹⁵

In the second case, Manuel Gouveia Pichau relates his experiences:

I left Funchal, Madeira in the s.s “Lourenco Marques”, on the 6th May, 1949 for Lourenco Marques, Portuguese East Africa. I landed in Lourenco Marques about the 2nd June 1949. I stayed with Mr. Julio Santos Serra of Changalane, Lourenco Marques. I did not like my work at Lourenco Marques so decided to come to South Africa with Mr. Manuel Lourenco de Gouveia. I stowed away on the Patria at Lourenco Marques and left for Cape Town on the 7th December 1949. A steward on board the s.s. Patria, known to me as Carmo assisted me and I paid him £25. This steward gave me food on the voyage and hid me in a cabin together with Manuel Lourenco de Gouveia. No one else on board the s.s. Patria knew of my presence. When the s.s. Patria arrived at Cape Town on the 9th December 1949 I walked off with the other passengers. I could obtain employment and was directed to Mr. Antonio Pontes Gouveia of 17 Dock Road, Cape Town, who employed me. I have been working there since. After a few days I told my employer Mr. Antonio

⁹⁵ WCA: PIO 403, 19009e. File of João Correia.

Pontes Gouveia that I had entered the Union of South Africa illegally, who said I could remain in his employ.⁹⁶

From the narratives, common elements are discernible. Stowaways would be assisted by an employee of the shipping company, because to remain concealed on the ship required the aid of sympathetic insiders.⁹⁷ The cash payment for this assistance supplemented their meagre wages. The ease with which Correia and Pichau had passed the immigration officials without being questioned implies that bribery of the immigration officials was possibly involved. Both managed to secure employment with a fellow Madeiran or a family member, despite their illegal status in the Union. This indicated that the tight-knit Madeiran community assisted their fellow countrymen irrespective of the possible legal consequences. Glaser notes that the most striking feature of the oral record from the 1950s to the mid-1970s 'is the sheer normality of Madeiran illegality'.⁹⁸ An interviewee recalled that in the 1950s her parents hid illegal Madeirans in their home.⁹⁹

There were exceptions to this generosity of Madeirans towards their illegal countrymen. A letter dated 30 April 1923 and addressed to the Secretary for the Interior revealed the following:

I have the honour to request your authority to pay José Serrao the sum of £5 as a reward for supplying information leading to the arrest and deportation of a Portuguese named Claudio Teixeira. This man was born in Madeira and entered the Union via Lourenço Marques about three years ago. He was a most undesirable type of illiterate. He sailed from the Union per R.M.S. "Arundel" on the 27th instant.¹⁰⁰

Serrao's actions were motivated by money, but in other cases, different motives are apparent.

Tip-offs about illegal employees came from within the community itself, prompted by an

⁹⁶ PIO 1107, 47820e. File of Manuel Gouveia Pichau.

⁹⁷ There was a long-standing belief that a stowaway was a symbol of luck, or that his concealment was so ingenious that it could only be explained by divine intervention. To refuse help, therefore, would bring ill-fortune.

⁹⁸ Glaser, 'White But Illegal', 88.

⁹⁹ Interview with Estela Ferreira on 7 September 2017.

¹⁰⁰ WCA: PIO 17, 3356e. File of Claudio Teixeira. A reward would only be paid if deportation took place.

avoidance to pay wages or the concerns of a father about a relationship developing between his daughter and an illegal immigrant.¹⁰¹ Members of the public also exposed illegal Madeirans to the immigration officials. In one case, a Mrs M.E. Kemp wrote to the Chief Immigration Officer in January 1952 and complained about an Admondo Fernandes. She related that Admondo ran away from Madeira, had no passport nor an identification certificate to produce and that 'Cape Town is full with these Portuguese illegal immigrants'.¹⁰² There are other such cases in the immigration files.¹⁰³

Illegal Indians were not immune from being exposed by fellow countrymen. The Immigration Department received a letter from a certain Ganpat stating that an arrival from India would be entering the Cape port in December 1910 on an illegally procured permit. On his arrival he was questioned and it was determined that he had never previously been in the country. He was subsequently deported.¹⁰⁴ In contrast, other Indians regarded the obtaining of illegal permits as assisting 'poor countrymen' and therefore, for them, there was no guilt or remorse attached to these activities.¹⁰⁵

The Immigration Department did pursue illegal immigrants in Cape Town and convictions were successful. The immigration records document the case of four Madeirans who did not return to their ship before it sailed. They were sentenced at Caledon Square to three months' hard labour at Roeland Street jail for being prohibited immigrants.¹⁰⁶ In another case, Alfredo Rodriques was sentenced in the Magistrate's Court, Cape Town, to six weeks' hard labour for illegally entering the Union.¹⁰⁷ The ages of the convicted in these two cases ranged from 19

¹⁰¹ Glaser, 'White But Illegal', 91.

¹⁰² WCA: PIO 1215, 52460e. File of Admondo Fernandes.

¹⁰³ See files WCA: PIO 35, 3395e. File of Antonio Lira and WCA: PIO 1060, 45797e. File of Manuel Ferreira Telo.

¹⁰⁴ Dhupelia- Mesthrie, 'Cat and Mouse Games', 197-198.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁰⁶ *Cape Argus*, 25 October 1949.

¹⁰⁷ *Cape Argus*, 12 February 1952.

to 38, indicating that they were still young and intended starting a new life in South Africa and eventually, if married with children, would have brought their families from Madeira.

Although many illegal Madeiran immigrants were arrested, prosecuted and eventually deported from the country, there were those who worked in the country without being detected or who could not be found by the police. This was the case of the Jardim brothers, who were in transit passengers on the M.V. “Imperio”. When the vessel left Cape Town on 14 August 1953, they were not on board. It transpired that a Portuguese man, Antonio Parau, from Johannesburg came to the vessel and requested that the two brothers be allowed to go ashore to visit friends. Parau handed the vessel official £200 as a guarantee against the return of the two passengers. When the vessel sailed, they had not returned. The Principal Immigration Officer had their Certificates of Identity, which contained their photographs and requested that particulars of their case be published in the South African Police Gazette with a view to their arrest as prohibited immigrants.¹⁰⁸ (See Figure 4.) The archival record ends with this request.



Employers also wrote to the immigration officials in support of their employees who had entered Cape Town illegally and were held in custody waiting to be deported. Two cases will be mentioned. In the case of Manuel Telo, the Director of South African Sea Products Ltd. wrote a letter dated 8 September 1950 to the Minister of the Interior and attested glowingly to Telo’s capabilities as a crawfish fisherman ‘in this very important dollar producing industry’.¹⁰⁹ In a telegram dated 14 September 1950, the Minister instructed that Telo be released and apply for an Aliens Temporary Permit valid for three months and to seek permanent residence. This again reaffirms the value which the government placed on the

¹⁰⁸ WCA: PIO 1423, 62251e. File of Francisco Jardim.

¹⁰⁹ WCA: PIO 1060, 45797e. File of Manuel Telo.

fishing industry and the influence of the large fishing corporations in persuading the authorities to overturn decisions on individual cases of illegal entry.

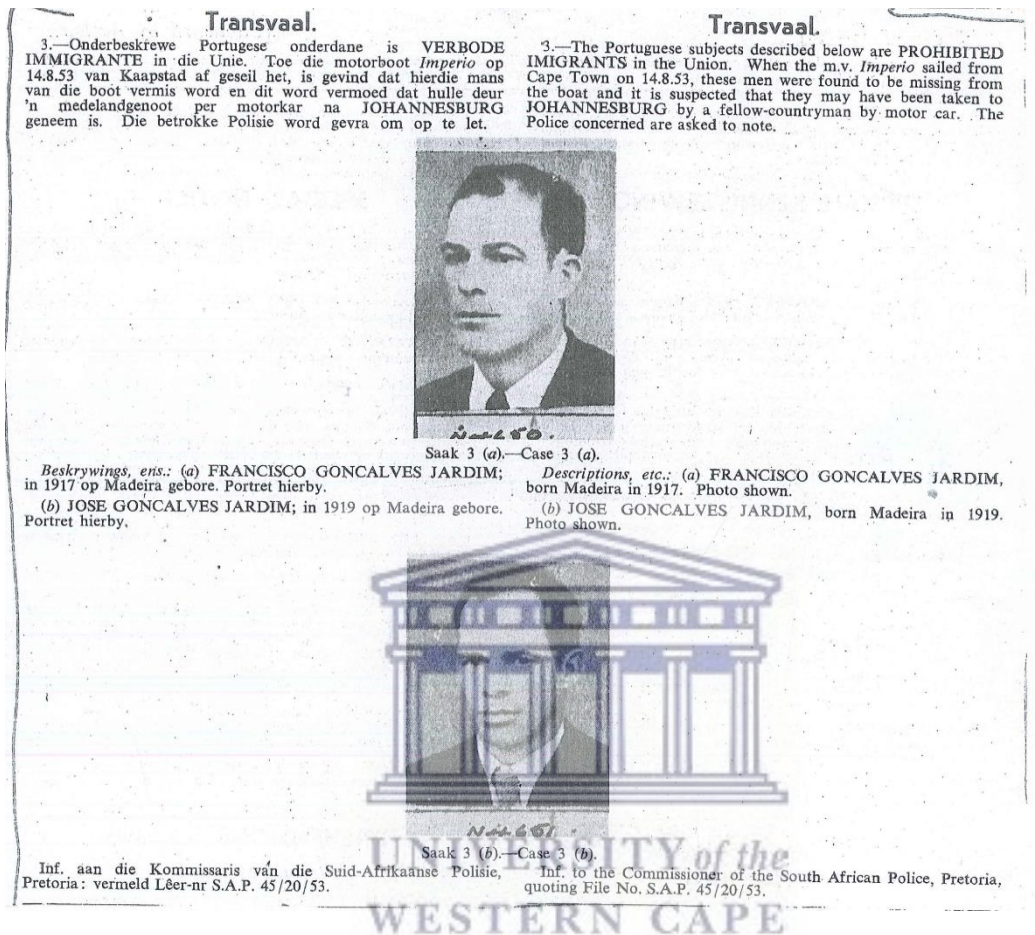


Figure 4: Prohibited Immigrants. Police Gazette No. 3563 dated 10 September 1953. WCA: PIO 1423, 62251e. File of Francisco Jardim.

In another case, illegal entry was not condoned. The manager of the Royal Hotel, Plein Street, Cape Town, wrote a letter dated 25 August 1923 to the Immigration Department stating the following:

It came to my knowledge that Antonio Lira, a cook in my employ at present, has infringed the Immigration law of the country and is likely to be deported. Do not think it presumption [sic] on my part if I testify to his character. I know this man for the past three years, and I had occasion to see and hear a lot of him. He is a good cook, of which we have very few in South Africa. He does not drink or gamble, keeps his hours, not out late at night, very clean, and saves his money in the Post Office.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ WCA: PIO 35, 3395e. File of Antonio Lira.

Despite this laudatory report, it could not prevent the deportation of Lira. He was not vital to any industry, especially the fishing trade.

It has been pointed out that Indians and Madeirans initially used different strategies to illegally enter the Cape and that from 1917, it became increasingly difficult for those regarded as 'undesirable' to enter the Union ports. Illegal immigrants sought other means of entry beyond the ports themselves. Madeirans, like Indians, largely circumvented the ports and made their way into the Union mainly from Lourenço Marques,¹¹¹ which was only five hundred kilometres from Johannesburg. The strategy of Madeirans and Indians to illegally enter South Africa would now follow a similar path.

To make the journey overland a possibility, Madeiran migrant racketeers were quick to tap into the highly profitable cross-country smuggling. Indians and Madeirans found themselves in an analogous situation and there was co-operation in illegality between these two ethnic groups to defeat the restrictions placed on them.¹¹² These syndicates were responsible for manipulating official documents or who bought blank temporary permits from dishonest officials and created fictitious employment contracts.¹¹³ Madeirans were now making use of false documents to enter South Africa.

The Immigration Department was aware of the inadequate control measures at Komatipoort, the crucial point of entry between Mozambique and South Africa. Officials improved surveillance at this border post. These improvements resulted in Madeirans by-passing Komatipoort altogether, by detouring around the border post on foot. The following narrative related by Miguel Jesus on 2 December 1965, is typical of the experience of many Madeirans:

I entered South Africa via Komati Poort from Lourenço Marques, Portuguese East Africa, accompanied by my father, João Jesus on or about the 11th of March 1963.

¹¹¹ Madeirans shared linguistic and ethnic connections with the Portuguese colonial society in Mozambique.

¹¹² MacDonald, 'Colonial Trespassers', 83.

¹¹³ MacDonald, 'Forging the Frontiers', 165.

We evaded the Passport Control Office at Komati Poort by passing through the veld. My father knew the way through the bush and was escorting me. I was not examined by any Passport Control Officer on arrival in South Africa nor did I report or have any intentions of reporting to a Passport Control Officer after my arrival in South Africa. We proceeded [sic] to Johannesburg where my father left me with some of his friends. I cannot remember their names or their addresses. My father returned to Lourenço Marques. From Johannesburg I found my way to Cape Town and started to work at a fisheries in Bellville for Mrs F. de Sousa as a shop assistant.¹¹⁴

In this case, like many others, Miguel made his way to Cape Town, where employment by a fellow Madeiran awaited him.

Illegal immigration has illustrated the limits of paper. Caplan and Torpey have argued that people and the state ‘routinely play cat-and-mouse with individual identification requirements’¹¹⁵ with people devising every conceivable scheme to thwart the state. The Associação da Colónia Portuguesa estimated that some 4,000 Madeirans successfully entered the Union illicitly in the late 1920s, with another large influx appeared to have taken place in the late 1930s and in the early 1950s.¹¹⁶ Without extensive research, one is not able to determine what happened to these illegal Madeirans; ‘they simply melted away; for a long period active participants in a complex South African landscape, but leaving little historical trace’.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how exclusionary immigration legislation emerged in the Cape Colony and became central to the Union legislation of 1913. Madeirans, like Indians, were regarded as ‘undesirable’ groups, and were affected by these legislative measures. For the largely illiterate Madeirans, passing of a literacy test was especially prohibitive. Indians were also affected by the literacy test. Unlike Indians, Madeirans who were illiterate, but had

¹¹⁴ WCA: PIO 2241, 97133e. File of Miguel Jesus.

¹¹⁵ Caplan and Torpey (eds), ‘Introduction’, *Documenting Individual Identity*, 7.

¹¹⁶ MacDonald, ‘Forging the Frontiers’, 171.

¹¹⁷ Glaser, ‘White But Illegal’, 92.

an employment contract, were exempted from the literacy test. Other similarities and differences between the experiences of these two ethnic groups are evident.

Both Indians and Madeirans made use of permits/certificates of identity to assure their re-entry into the Cape. Without these documents, they would be subject to the literacy test. From 1913, new immigration from India was prohibited, whereas Madeirans were never totally excluded from entry. Legislation from 1913 focussed on European immigration. In the late 1960s, Nationalist party immigration policies were particularly antagonistic towards Madeirans.

While Madeirans were regarded as an 'undesirable' group, the large fishing companies were influential regarding important matters concerning the Madeirans. They managed to overturn refusals from the Immigrants Selection Board for their permanent residency. They were also instrumental in preventing the deportation of employees who were illegally in Cape Town. These aspects illustrated the value of the Madeirans for the fishing industry and the economic importance of the fishing industry for South Africa.

Madeirans who were illiterate and without an employment contract, resorted to illegal immigration. Their strategy was to stowaway and 'jump ship' at the Cape ports. Unlike Madeirans, Indians resorted to fraudulent documents to enter the Cape, even making use of corrupt officials within the immigration department. With more stringent surveillance measures implemented at the ports from 1917, illegal entry shifted to Lourenço Marques. Indians and Madeirans found themselves in a similar position, resulting in cross-racial alliances between these two ethnic groups. For overland entry via Komatipoort, both made use of fraudulent documents to enter South Africa, with some by-passing the border post altogether.

The next chapter will examine the motivating factors for leaving Madeira, but more particularly, it will focus on women in the migration process, marriages and the variety of types of households that were constituted. The split-household is especially important in this regard.



CHAPTER TWO

MARRIAGES AND THE SPLIT-HOUSEHOLD

Introduction

I have the honour to report having seen Mrs de Andrade at her house no. 4 Windsor Street, Cape Town and she states that she was born in this Province. Her parents were Portuguese. She has been married about 7 years. Her husband is a Portuguese. There are 3 children of the marriage, 2 girls and one boy, aged 3 years, 18 months and three months. Her husband has been in this country about 12 years. She states that he is a very steady, sober man and kept her and her children well provided for. When he left her last November he did not tell her he was going away, but she was not quite destitute as she had £14 in the bank and since that has been spent she has been living more or less on charity. At the time her husband went away she did not know why he went, but since then she found he had been keeping company with a young Coloured girl who lived somewhere in Roeland Street and since he went away this girl gave birth to a child to him. Mrs de Andrade only wishes her husband to be allowed to return that he may be forced to support his children. I may state that this woman appears to be a respectable person. She is not strong and her children is [sic] also very delicate.¹

This report dated 28 June 1912 from the District Surgeon opens up certain aspects of Madeiran marriages in Cape Town. In the early years of the twentieth century, this type of marriage was rare, because of the unavailability of eligible second-generation Madeiran women in Cape Town. Glaser remarks that this only changed 'once gender ratios had evened out among second generation Madeirans in South Africa'. This happened only by the late 1970s and 1980s.² Initially, unmarried Madeirans in Cape Town returned to Madeira to find a bride and, later, marriage by proxy became popular.

The report also confirms the oral testimonies that extra-marital affairs with coloured women occurred in Cape Town. The abandonment of wives was usually permanent, but, in this case, de Andrade returned to Cape Town from America in December 1912 after his parish priest (Fr. William Griffin) attempted to reconcile the family. The priest pointed out that his family

¹ WCA: PIO 20, 2476e. File of John de Andrade.

² Glaser, 'Home, Farm and Shop', 891.

was dependent on charity to survive and that his return would ensure that his wife and children ‘may be saved from ruin’. De Andrade responded to the priest, stating that he wished to return to Cape Town, because ‘it is throw [sic] your letter that indicated to me more than anything else to go back to my dear ones...’ and that it ‘was all a reckless mistake to have left them without protection...’³ This also indicates the influential role that priests had on the lives of the pioneer Madeirans. However, the usual practice was for marriage to take place in Madeira and the husband established himself in South Africa and called for his wife after several years. This chapter draws attention to the role of women in the migration process.

There is a body of literature which is critical of the ways in which women have been portrayed in the migration process. Sally Peberdy argues that in South Africa prior to 1994, ‘women were conspicuously absent from official debates around immigration. For the state, immigrants were white men. Women were their silenced partners’.⁴ Dhupelia-Mesthrie states that ‘[m]ale mobility has generally been prioritised for males are seen as the workers, the traders, the professionals and the explorers’.⁵ Glaser has similarly argued that ‘only male migration is seen as economically significant and the family is relegated to the social and cultural sphere’.⁶ Louise Ryan *et al* argue that in the emigration process, women are considered mostly ‘within narrow domestic and familial contexts, playing supporting roles as wives and home-makers’.⁷ The traditional view is that women are the ‘silent partners’ and

³ WCA: PIO 20, 2476e. File of John de Andrade. In his letter dated 8 May 1912 to Fr Griffin, de Andrade refers to the letter which he received from the priest, the content of which ‘I have been thinking a lot about what you said’.

⁴ Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants*, 16.

⁵ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Split-Households’, 636.

⁶ Glaser, ‘Home, Farm and Shop’ 886.

⁷ Louise Ryan *et al*, ‘Family Strategies and Transnational Migration’, 64.

followers of their husbands. Lucy Williams unsettles this view, as she argues for the role of women ‘as initiators and motivators for migration’⁸ to receive greater prominence.

In this chapter and the next, the lacuna regarding the role of women in the migration and settlement process will be addressed, as to give them a place in the historical record.

However, it is not the intention to present a hagiographical image of Madeiran women. This chapter will argue that women were desirous of marrying and leaving the poverty of Madeira. It was the wives, to a large extent, who encouraged their husbands to emigrate and even made it possible. Furthermore, it will be argued that parents, especially mothers, played a crucial role in influencing their children in their decision of a marriage partner.

In the first section of this chapter, it will be determined that the poverty in Madeira provided the impetus for women to marry and to leave their island for a better life. Cape Town proved to be a destination of desirability, especially if the husband was involved in the fishing trade or a family member owned a business there. In the second section, the focus will be on the split-household (where the wife was in Madeira and the husband in Cape Town) and its consequences for both the wife and the husband. This included the changed role of the wife in Madeira and the severe strain which was put on the marriage bond. The separation resulted in the abandonment of wives and extra-marital affairs by both the husband and the wife.

Thirdly, it will be suggested that marriage by proxy was the most practical option for those Madeirans in Cape Town who sought a wife in Madeira. Finally, this chapter draws comparisons with Indian households in Cape Town to determine how distinctive the Madeiran case was.

This chapter makes use of oral narratives and allows the memories and experiences of children who grew up in Madeira in the 1950s and 1960s to filter through. In the decades

⁸ Williams, *Global Marriage*, 20.

prior to this period, the situation in Madeira was the same. The narratives of children place a new perspective on immigration as it points to memories of their departure from their island homeland and their experiences in Cape Town. Nine interviewees came to Cape Town as children when they were between four to fourteen years of age. It is with these narratives of childhood in Madeira that this chapter starts before moving on to the question of marriages.

Life in Madeira

Life in Madeira was marked by hardship and poverty. The fishing villages such as Paúl do Mar, Calheta, Câmara de Lobos, Caniçal and Machico relied on their small catches and the meagre profits which this brought to support the usually large families. Without refrigeration facilities, fish that could not be sold had to be discarded. Fishermen from fishing villages close to Funchal, such as Câmara de Lobos, took their catches to sell at the central market there.

The agricultural villages such as Achadas da Cruz, Ribeira da Janela, Boaventura and Santana were dominated by subsistence farming on smallholdings, which were either owned or rented from landowners. Not enough was produced for sale at a reasonable profit. A barter economy developed between the villages. For example, the women from the village of Paúl do Mar used to take baskets of fish, after climbing steep hills, to neighbouring agricultural villages in exchange for vegetables, mostly potatoes. The simplicity of the food is also an indication of their frugal and austere life-style, where meals were usually vegetable soup ('sopa de legumes') or fish and fried mealie-meal ('milho frito'). Meat was a luxury eaten on Easter Sunday and during the Christmas season.⁹

⁹ Interview with Manuel Alves, 25 April 2018. Traditionally, a pork dish, *carne com vinho e alhos*, is prepared over the Christmas period.

The houses were generally very modest, without baths, toilets, water or electricity. Maria Jardim recalled her experience as a child in Madeira: ‘we used to sleep in one bed, my mom and two sisters on the one side and I was sleeping on the feet side of the bed’.¹⁰ Dulce Alves also reminisces:

I remember collecting water down the road. We used to go with little 5 litre cans. My mother had a big tank, a 200- litre tank, and we filled that up every morning, so we could use that water for every day. I remember my granny ironing with those old irons that you put coals in; those were the irons they used in those days, because there was no electricity. We cooked food on a fire.

She further recalls how they entertained themselves in the absence of toys:

Those smooth beach stones we played on them, they were our dolls. We would make little eyes, make little dresses, decorate little arms; those were our toys. That is what we played with... It was a happy time for me.¹¹

More strikingly, the poverty of the island is illustrated by the practice of sending girls as young as nine years of age from the rural agricultural villages to Funchal to work as maids in the homes of the more affluent families.¹² Filomena Francisco recalled that during the late 1950s and early 1960s she worked from the age of nine for five years in the home of the owner of a clothing shop in Funchal. She had to look after the baby and two other small children, cook and do other household chores. She only saw her parents once or twice a year.¹³ This brought in an income for the family, no matter how small it was.

It also happened that a Godmother (‘madrinha’) or a distant relative living in Funchal and usually not having children of their own, sent for a young girl from a rural, agricultural village to assist in the home by doing age-appropriate chores. The young girl would be taught to read and write and learn sewing, embroidery and other forms of handiwork.¹⁴ This was to teach the young girl how to be a housewife in preparation for her eventual marriage. When

¹⁰ Interview with Maria Jardim, 27 September 2017.

¹¹ Interview with Dulce Alves, 25 April 2018.

¹² Interview with Filomena Francisco, 31 July 2017.

¹³ Telephonic conversation with Filomena Francisco, 18 February 2018.

¹⁴ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018.

some of these girls eventually married and left Madeira in their late teens, it was less traumatic for them, because the bond between them and their parents had already been virtually severed.

Aside from working on the land and bartering in fruit, vegetables and fish, the women with certain skills managed to contribute financially to the household. A skilled seamstress would stay in a village for a few days and go to people's houses to do any mending or make clothing for the family. Payment was never in cash, but rather in items that were required.¹⁵

Embroidery was also a source of income. The women did embroidery work for a firm in Funchal and received payment based on the number of items completed.¹⁶ It was not only a means of making money, but also had social and psychological value, because groups of women embroidered together while they discussed family matters and shared problems.

Furthermore, some villages had unique products which were sold to bring in an income. The village of Camacha, for example, is noted for its wicker baskets, furniture and many ornamental items, requiring fine craftsmanship.

Educational opportunities in Madeira were severely limited. Funchal was the only place until the late 1960s which offered secondary/tertiary opportunities,¹⁷ but most Madeirans could not afford to send their children there for further studies. It was not only affordability, but also the long distances to Funchal. Without an advanced transport infrastructure, educational opportunities in Funchal were hampered. It happened that a few fortunate Madeirans from the rural villages went to America to make money and on return could afford to send their children for higher education in Funchal, Lisbon or Coimbra.¹⁸

¹⁵ Interview with Estela Ferreira, 7 September 2017.

¹⁶ Interview with Lidia Afonso, 14 August 2017.

¹⁷ Machado, 'Little Madeira', 11.

¹⁸ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

The Church provided many poorer boys from eleven/twelve years of age with a seminary education in the hope that they would be attracted to the priesthood. They stayed permanently at the seminary and if they left without becoming priests, they were well educated and could find employment in Funchal as teachers, government workers and so forth.¹⁹ However, most Madeirans had to be satisfied with schooling to the level of ‘quarta classe’²⁰ where they were taught basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills, history, geography and drawing.²¹ Furthermore, influential figures within the *Estado Novo*²² (‘New State’) ‘openly advocated the “glories” of illiteracy for the poor’, believing that this would prevent the lower classes from being influenced by subversive literature and thereby threatening the security of the state.²³

There were instances where parents were not always willing to send their children to school, but rather for them to assist with the work to bring in an income. The father would decide which son would assist on the fishing boat, rather than going to school.²⁴ Filomena Francisco recalled her experience: ‘we used to hide from him [the father], because if he catches you in the morning, he would not let you go to school but to work on the lands with him’.²⁵ She also related her perception that ‘you weren’t supposed to have higher education; you grew up as a girl and from a girl to a woman, get married have children and look after your husband, look after the family and that was it’.²⁶

¹⁹ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018. See also Tom Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth Century Interpretation*, 63.

²⁰ Machado holds that this is equivalent to ‘standard 4’ in South Africa. See ‘Little Madeira’, 11.

²¹ Interview with Ligia Fernandes,

²² Dr Antonio de Oliveira (1889-1970), was head of government from the early 1930s to the late 1960s. The *Estado Novo* regime (God, *patria*, authority, family and work were its essential values) was overthrown by the revolution of 1974-1975.

²³ Gallagher, *Portugal: A Twentieth Century Interpretation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 99.

²⁴ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

²⁵ Interview with Filomena Francisco, 31 July 2017.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

This section has illustrated the poverty and the lack of opportunities in Madeira. Families would have realised that the only way to escape the poverty and to make ‘good money’ would be to emigrate.

Marriage in Madeira

In Madeira, the girls and young women were strictly supervised and largely confined to the home. Dulce Alves remembered her upbringing in Madeira with her sisters:

My mom didn’t allow us to mix with anybody. We went to school and came home, we went to church and came home, we played at home and went to visit the aunties, the uncles and cousins. We weren’t allowed to mix. The boys were allowed to go and play with friends.²⁷

A young man usually took an interest in a young girl whom he saw in church or at one of the many *festas*. He would never approach the girl directly – there was a connection without communication. Friends would be used to communicate his interest in a certain girl. The parents of a young man would also play a role in suggesting a potential marriage partner, by telling their son about ‘a nice girl; we watched how she conducts herself, with what friends she is involved with, and how good [a] worker she is and if she is respectable. Respect was the main thing there’.²⁸

Hermenegilda Correia recalled growing up in Paúl do Mar during the 1940s/early 1950s. When young women went out in public, they had to walk with their heads down and not make eye contact with members of the opposite sex or speak to them. They were only allowed to speak to male family members. If a young man was interested in a certain marriage partner, he would approach the parents and make a definite commitment of marriage. If the parents agreed, then he could take the young woman out, but always with a chaperone. If this relationship was ever broken off, then ash would be put along the road from

²⁷ Interview with Dulce Alves, 25 April 2018.

²⁸ Interview with Filomena Francisco, 31 July 2017.

the doorstep of the house of the young woman to the doorstep of the house of the young man for the whole village to know about the broken relationship. The woman's reputation would be tainted and the chances of her ever marrying would be remote. The young man emerged unscathed and would find no difficulty in finding another potential bride.²⁹

It was customary for marriage to take place between couples from the same village.

Marriages took place between villages, but this was usually when men from elsewhere came to work in the village. For example, skilled carpenters came to a fishing village to work on the boats and took an interest in a young woman living there. It also happened that first cousins from the same village married each other. The women tended to marry at an early age, usually between sixteen and nineteen years of age, and have large families. Women who were not married by their late twenties were likely to remain spinsters.³⁰ Marriage was viewed as a life-time commitment, because from a religious point of view, divorce would not be a consideration, even if the woman was in an abusive marriage. Separation from a husband because of marital problems would also not be tolerated.

On the death of the husband, the wife would always be dressed in black for a specified period, but usually for the rest of her life. For the widow, re-marriage would be rare. Re-marriage took place under certain circumstances. If a mother died in child-birth (some villages did not have a resident doctor to assist with child- birth) and the child survived, the widower would look towards his deceased wife's sister or somebody else close in the family as a marriage partner. The idea behind this was that somebody within the family would be more likely to look after the surviving child (and other children from the first marriage) more lovingly than somebody from outside the family, who could possibly ill-treat the children.³¹

²⁹ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

³⁰ Glaser, 'Home, Farm and Shop', 889.

³¹ Interview with Maria Virissimo, 22 January 2018.

It would be unheard of for young women to travel on their own. This was brought to the fore when Alberto Gonçalves related that his uncle had formed a dance group in Madeira in 1953. The dance group decided to tour Spain, but it was not possible to find girls to travel with the group, because the parents would not allow the daughters to travel on their own, even within a group. It was only married women with their husbands who agreed to travel to Spain.³²

It is worthy to note that up to 1989, the Portuguese government issued passports only to men. The wives and other dependents were required to travel on the men's passports.³³ In countries such as Saudi Arabia, this guardianship system is still followed. A male family member must grant permission for a woman to study abroad, travel and undertake other activities.³⁴

As they were not allowed to travel alone, one way to escape the poverty for a better life was for women to marry and emigrate. Filomena Francisco indicated that there was a desire to leave the island because 'for me I was aiming for a goal for a better future; something different. I didn't want to live the life the way my mother and aunties lived'.³⁵ This is a common view emphasised by a number of interviewees including Maria da Silva, as she remarked: 'you know it was hard times and as a young woman, I suppose, that marriage was an opportunity to get out of Madeira and away from the hard times'.³⁶ Some women had an exaggerated image of what marriage and emigration would bring, which included 'having drawers with fine linen and a beautiful home'.³⁷ This feminine view contrasts with the masculinist desire of finding employment by entering the fishing trade or starting a business in their new country. Thus, there is a marked difference between the feminine and masculinist

³² Interview with Alberto Gonçalves, 26 July 2017.

³³ Sarah J. Mahler and Patricia R. Pessar, 'Gender Matters: Ethnographers Bring Gender from the Periphery Toward the Core of Migration Studies', *International Migration Review*, Volume 40, Number 1, Spring 2006, 39-40.

³⁴ *Cape Times*, 20 March 2018, 2.

³⁵ Interview with Filomena Francisco, 31 July 2017.

³⁶ Interview with Maria da Silva(a), 10 September 2017.

³⁷ Interview with Maria dos Santos, 6 August 2017.

narratives, in that the former ‘more readily [engages] with feeling, emotion and more particularly with a fine attention to the domestic and the personal’.³⁸

After marriage there was a decision for the husband to leave Madeira and establish himself in a country which could offer a brighter future than the *miseria* experienced in the homeland. Migration was considered ‘manly and proactive, as a way of breaking out of the cycle of poverty’.³⁹ Pessar and Mahler state that this was not only a rite of passage into manhood, but ‘also an affirmation of their masculinity and their increased value as prospective husbands’.⁴⁰

Glaser observes that wives often encouraged their husbands to emigrate.⁴¹ They therefore played an active decision-making role in this regard. Their decisions were based on long-term considerations, such as the future of their children. The wives realised the practical difficulties that they would experience while their husbands were away, such as undertaking the role and activities of the departing husband. She had to keep the family and home ‘together’. This supports the argument of Glytsos that women were the “invisible backbone” of the migration process.⁴² The husbands would leave Madeira after they were certain that the wife could cope on her own and that the children would be well cared for. As will be seen later in the chapter, the role of the women in split migrant families was crucial.

The spouse accepted that this separation was necessary which had to be endured for a few years, while she waited for her husband to call for her. Glaser remarks that the experience of women in Madeira was that of waiting: ‘waiting for letters and news from absent men, waiting for remittances to help with daily survival, waiting to be called to join men overseas,

³⁸ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Cultural Crossings from Africa to India: Select Travel Narratives of Indian South Africans from Durban and Cape Town, 1940s to 1990s’, *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 2, June 2012, 311.

³⁹ Glaser, ‘Home, Farm and Shop’, 888.

⁴⁰ Patricia R. Pessar and Sarah J. Mahler, ‘Transnational Migration: Bringing Gender In’, *International Migration Review*, 37(3), 2003, 829.

⁴¹ Glaser, ‘Home, Farm and Shop’, 888.

⁴² Glytsos, ‘Changing Roles and Attitudes of Women’, 97.

waiting to be married.⁴³ This aspect of waiting was also the usual experience for Indian wives whose husbands travelled to Cape Town from India. Dhupelia-Mesthrie has shown how the split-household was the dominant form for many decades as Indian male migrants sought to establish themselves.⁴⁴ Polish migrants to London also regarded it as more sensible for the husband to establish himself while the wife waited in Poland. A Polish interviewee stated the following:

I am on my own, I can earn... if I had come here with my family, obviously, I wouldn't live here with a wife and a child in one room... when there is a child, when there is a family, one needs to cook dinner... We would have to spend money... if I am on my own, I will save more.⁴⁵

Thus, the fate of Madeiran wives was similar to that of other ethnic groups who migrated out of necessity to improve their lives.

Cape Town: An Area of Destination

As with migration from the Indian sub-continent, Madeiran entry into South Africa was characterised by chain migration. A family member, usually an uncle or a brother, or even a Godfather⁴⁶ who had already established themselves in the country, would inform relatives by letter or by visiting Madeira about the opportunities available in the country. An interviewee mentioned that '... guys would come over [to Madeira] and tell the others of being successful and even take photos of a building and say this is mine. They would exaggerate what they were doing even though they weren't doing better'.⁴⁷ For those seeking a bride in Madeira, this could also have been used as a ploy to impress the parents of a girl whom he wanted to marry. Also, those Madeirans who had established themselves in South Africa returned with their families after five to ten years to visit, and 'were well-dressed and

⁴³ Glaser, 'Home, Farm and Shop', 889.

⁴⁴ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Split-Households', 646.

⁴⁵ Louise Ryan *et al*, 'Family Strategies and Transnational Migration', 66.

⁴⁶ The Godfather ('padrinho') was held in high esteem by his Godchild and he was addressed by his Godchild as 'padrinho'.

⁴⁷ Interview with Alberto Gonçalves, 26 July 2017.

the children were nice and round and fat.’⁴⁸ This indicated good health with lots to eat and prosperity. An idealistic image was constructed of South Africa in the minds of fellow-villagers, who also wanted to be part of that country – their perceived ‘heaven on earth’.

In some instances, young men emigrated to escape being conscripted into the army for four years and be sent to fight in Portugal’s colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau or East Timor. If the father was already in South Africa, he would send for his son(s) before he/they reached the conscription age of 18 years.⁴⁹

To many Madeirans, Cape Town specifically proved to be an attractive destination of emigration. There were several reasons for this. South Africa had a well-established shipping route linking Madeira to the Cape and was near Portugal’s colonial possessions in southern Africa.⁵⁰ Furthermore, in most cases, an established relative in Cape Town would have employment available in his shop or on the fishing boats for the newly arrived family member. Fellow Madeirans also ensured that they offered employment to the new arrivals. Employment in a shop would usually include food, accommodation and a small salary. The newly arrived migrant was dependant on the employment and would therefore be hesitant to complain about the working conditions. Emotional support and information about matters such as health care services and recreational opportunities would also be provided. This support network was a key factor in the decision to emigrate to Cape Town.

Unlike networks based on friendship, which may be transient, family networks tended to be long-lasting. This supportive and protective family network can be illustrated by the minutes of an immigration appeal case held in Cape Town on 6 April 1923 involving Alfredo Teixeira De Mendonça (the appellant). He was prohibited by the Minister of the Interior on economic

⁴⁸ Interview with Maggie de Sousa, 7 February 2018.

⁴⁹ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018.

⁵⁰ Glaser, ‘White But Illegal’, 78-79.

grounds as ‘not being suitable for the country’. His uncle, a Mr de Leine, testified that Alfredo came from a large family of eleven siblings (only three had obtained work in Madeira) and that he (the uncle) would be doing his sister a favour by getting one of his nephews to help him in the business. Eventually he hoped to set Alfredo up in his own business – a fruit shop or a tea-room. The uncle undertook to support him and was prepared to sign a guarantee for Alfredo.⁵¹ The file does not include further details about the case, but indicates the support of family.

Although most Madeiran migrants who came to South Africa had family support, there were others who depended on their own resources or the generosity of others. They had no stability and had to travel around to find suitable employment. The narrative which follows represents such an example. Joaquim Costa of 18 Long St. Cape Town related his story on 16 January 1923:

I am now 19 years of age. I came to South Africa about two years ago and went to Delagoa Bay in search of work. I travelled on the s/s “Africa” via Cape Town which reached Lourenço Marques on the 26th March 1921. I was a second-class passenger. I entered the Transvaal about 4 months ago. I paid £3 for a second-class ticket from Lourenço Marques to Johannesburg. I stayed in the latter place for about two months and for that period worked at different cafés. I travelled from Johannesburg in short stages and arrived in Cape Town about the 15th December last. I did not pay for the last stages of my journey. I have no money and I am not doing any work at present although I have been promised a situation at the Parliament café on the 19th instant. I can read and write Portuguese.⁵²

Irrespective of whether the male new-comers to Cape Town had family support or not, life was not easy for them. Maria Virissimo elaborates further:

They usually lived in little back rooms to save and usually when they had family members they had to share a room so that they could build themselves up. Share with other guys just to save money. It was difficult for them; they didn’t know the language, they didn’t know a word of English or Afrikaans or any other language. They just knew the Portuguese.⁵³

Dulce Alves holds a similar view:

⁵¹ WCA: PIO 34, 3347e. File of Alfredo De Mendonça.

⁵² WCA: PIO 34, 3333e. File of Joaquim Costa.

⁵³ Interview with Maria Virissimo, 22 January 2018.

It was difficult for them. They did not have a wife and [in Madeira] they were used to a wife and family. Could not speak the language. Does not know a word of English and must try and find a job. My dad actually came as a fisherman, but he got sea-sick and could not be a fisherman. He had to do his trade, but could not speak English.⁵⁴

Benardete Caboz expressed the same sentiment by stating that ‘they did not have an easy life. They lived in a little room, they had to cook for themselves, they had to sew on their buttons... nobody speaks English’.⁵⁵

Ultimately, the intention of the migrant was to establish himself and eventually buy his own business or enter into a partnership with another Madeiran. It happened that the family member for whom he worked did, after he had proven himself as a hard worker, buy him a business which he had to repay.⁵⁶ The money was lent ‘just with a note’ and no interest was payable.⁵⁷ In a similar vein, Manuel Alves related that in those days honour was important. He continued by stating that ‘if I had a deal with you, I did not have to write it down; there was no paperwork’.⁵⁸

The fishing possibilities was another factor which served as a magnet to draw Madeirans to Cape Town, and which also served as a springboard to the lucrative South West African fishing industry. It was there where they spent six months of the year. Pedro Machado states that Madeiran skippers employed in Cape Town, Lüderitz or Walvis Bay and who had family in Madeira, recruited fishermen for the fishing companies. The wives of the skippers who were still in Madeira also played a role in seeking local men to work in the fishing industry in South Africa. This promise of a work contract proved more attractive than remaining in Madeira where work possibilities were scarce. The wives were paid a small fee by the

⁵⁴ Interview with Dulce Alves, 25 April 2018.

⁵⁵ Interview with Benardete Caboz, 18 November 2017.

⁵⁶ Conversation with Luis da Silva, 22 January 2018.

⁵⁷ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018.

⁵⁸ Interview with Manuel Alves, 25 April 2018.

recruited fishermen for their efforts.⁵⁹ The Madeiran authorities instructed that the recruitment could not be done from one village only but had to be spread amongst all the fishing villages in Madeira.⁶⁰ This was a fair practice, because everybody would have an equal opportunity of starting a better life for themselves elsewhere.

For those Madeirans leaving their homeland with long periods of separation from their wives and children, it had certain consequences. This aspect will be considered in the next section.

The Split-household and its Consequences

Referring to the work of Claude Markovits, Dhupelia-Mesthrie points out that the pattern of migration followed by Indian males in the early twentieth century in Cape Town can be described as ‘circular migration’. This meant that migration was temporary (‘incomplete migration’). The aim was to improve the economic circumstances of the family in India, rather than to start a new life elsewhere. For these first-generation Indians, the cycle of migration ended with retirement, when the husband returned to India.⁶¹

In contrast to ‘circular migration’, Madeiran males had no desire to amass wealth in Cape Town and then return to Madeira. The intention was mostly to leave their homeland permanently, establish themselves and then send for their wives and children. Lidia Afonso comments that ‘my father never wanted to go back to Madeira to live... because we had a comfortable life here... we had good schooling, we had a good house... we were comfortable you know’.⁶²

Like Indian migrants, the split-households endured until the Madeiran migrant could afford to bring out his family. While Dhupelia-Mesthrie does not explore the way in which the roles of

⁵⁹ Machado, ‘Little Madeira’ 12-13.

⁶⁰ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

⁶¹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Split-Households’, 641.

⁶² Interview with Lidia Afonso, 14 August 2017.

women left behind in India may have changed, this study argues that the consequences of the split-household changed the life of the wife left behind in Madeira. She had new responsibilities of making decisions affecting the family, and this changed the traditional role of women in Madeiran society.

For Madeirans, the patriarchal family was transformed into a matriarchal family, with the household becoming female-headed and the wife undertaking the responsibilities of the husband. Filomena Francisco remarked that when her father-in-law left Madeira, her mother-in-law 'was a mother, father and wife, looked after the children and did everything. Looked after the land, planted a lot of vegetables and used to sell'.⁶³ Alberto Gonçalves expressed the same sentiment when he stated that 'in the fishing villages the wives became very strong people, making decisions to maintain their family, look after their family without their husbands'.⁶⁴ In the majority of cases, the wives either lived with their parents or stayed close to them, and therefore had a reliable support structure. Indian wives remained with in-laws and were subject to the rules of patriarchy, bearing children during the husband's periodical visits to the village.

Nicholas Glytsos documents the emigration of males from the secluded Greek island of Kythera to Australia during the 1950s and 1960s, with the wives remaining behind, without the protection of a male figure. This made them vulnerable to hateful gossip and 'exposed them to offensive behaviour and verbal abuse by discourteous males'.⁶⁵ This would have been the same in Madeira, where the wives left behind became vulnerable to malicious gossip. This could come from family members, such as a mother-in-law, not satisfied with her son's choice of a bride. If their gossip centred around the perceived immoral behaviour of

⁶³ Interview with Filomena Francisco, 31 July 2017.

⁶⁴ Interview with Alberto Gonçalves, 26 July 2017.

⁶⁵ Glytsos, 'Changing Roles and Attitudes of Women', 100.

the wife, it could have devastating effects. When the husband heard about it, he could use it as a pretext to stop sending the remittances, especially if he was involved in a formalised extra-marital relationship in Cape Town.⁶⁶

Although the absence of husbands did, in some ways, make the lives of wives more difficult, it did bring certain benefits. Once the husband started working and earned an income, they remitted money to their wives, which improved their standard of living and elevated their social status. This extra income served to lighten the burden of the wife. She could employ somebody to plough the land. Also, it was possible to send a child to Funchal for further studies.⁶⁷ The money was usually sent twice a year i.e. during Easter and Christmas. Indian wives also received money from their husband working in Cape Town, which improved their position in the village. However, in some cases, Madeiran husbands found survival difficult in Cape Town and there was no money to send home. Manuel Alves elaborates:

My dad struggled in Cape Town. One year my mother told me that she wrote him a letter to say that the wives of other men are saying that they are getting money and you never send me any money. He replied that if you don't believe me, if you want to believe other people's talk, then take the gold chain [which the father had taken with him to Cape Town] in the envelope and sell it, because I don't have money.⁶⁸

The gold chain was never sold and has now been passed on to a family member.

The separation from a wife and children lasted six to seven years, the average period for the husband to establish himself. During this time, most husbands would not visit their family in Madeira because of the cost involved and because of their employment commitments – loss of income could not be afforded. This money could be better used to purchase a house or household goods in preparation for the eventual arrival of the wife and children. There was only the exchange of letters and photographs.

⁶⁶ Interview with Estela Ferreira, 15 February 2018.

⁶⁷ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018.

⁶⁸ Interview with Manuel Alves, 25 April 2018.

This narrative of the separated spouses could be disrupted in several ways. In other words, how did the husbands cope with the split-household? Did they remain faithful to their wives or did they become involved in local sexual entanglements while separated from their wives? Were the wives in Madeira faithful to the marriage partnership? These were similar questions that Dhupelia-Mesthrie attempted to answer regarding Indian men separated for lengthy periods from their wives. The only response which she could elicit was that they remained faithful to their wives. She regards this as an idealistic view, but from the immigration records she determined that some Indian men did have relationships with coloured, white and Malay women in Cape Town. Furthermore, many Muslim Indian men had a family in Cape Town and one or more families in India. Dhupelia-Mesthrie argues for further research to determine what Indian men in Cape Town did while separated from their wives.⁶⁹ She was unable to pursue the issue of female infidelities in India during the absence of husbands.

Claude Markovits investigated the sexual practices of merchant travellers from the Sind and he identified three models, which he termed the 'ascetic', the 'permissive' and the 'intermediate'. He found Shikarpuri merchants in Russian Central Asia lived without women. No Shikarpuri women ever came to Central Asia. Those in Chinese Sinkiang took local women as concubines or common law wives. In places like Egypt and Morocco, frequenting prostitutes seemed to have been a customary practice. In countries such as the Philippines, where Sindhi merchants remained for lengthy periods, longstanding relationships were formed with local women. Marriages with local women were known to have taken place in Japan, China and Egypt, despite the merchants already having a wife and children.⁷⁰ The women left behind in Shikarpur were young and their sexual practices in the absence of their husbands were also of interest to Markovits. He found that they were allowed to have

⁶⁹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Split-Households', 640.

⁷⁰ Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants 1750-1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 267-270.

relations with other males to produce heirs. To the present day, the reputation of Shikarpuri women ‘for sexual freedom and ‘lewdness’’ has remained well-established in Sind.⁷¹

Oral narratives reveal a range of consequences of spousal separation for the Madeirans. In extreme cases, some of the husbands permanently abandoned their wives in Madeira and established formalised relationships with Cape Town women, both white and coloured. This had devastating effects for the wives and children in Madeira, because the remittance money would no longer be sent, causing much hardship. In one case, a husband left Madeira when his wife was pregnant and eventually lived with somebody else in Cape Town. After twenty-three years he returned to Madeira and saw his son for the first time.⁷² The son had been deprived of the important influence of a father while growing up. In another instance, a husband sent for his wife in Madeira and when she arrived, she had to share the house with her husband’s lover; the South African lover stayed in the front of the house, while the wife was at the back.⁷³ The wife was in a vulnerable position, because if she was not satisfied and complained too much, she would be sent back to Madeira and be faced with poverty and loneliness.

Indian wives, in comparison, were in an additionally vulnerable position. Polygamy, practiced within both the Hindu and Muslim faiths, was not tolerated in South Africa. The Indian Relief Act 22 of 1914 made provision for only one wife to enter Cape Town. Also, if an Indian married a local woman, the wife in India would be denied entry.⁷⁴ This left the wife and children in India without any rights at all. From 1956 to 1985, when Indians were denied the right to bring new wives from India, the Cape-born Indian population was large enough to

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 273-274.

⁷² Interview with Maria Afonso, 26 July 2017.

⁷³ Interview with Celia Afonso, 6 August 2017.

⁷⁴ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘The Form, the Permit and the Photograph: An Archive of Mobility between South Africa and India, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 46(6), 2011, 657-658.

provide marriage partners among themselves.⁷⁵ Unlike Indians, Madeirans were in a more advantageous position and could bring out wives from Madeira.

For Indians, the split-household could take on a different form to that of Madeirans. Some South African wives were taken to India, while the husbands worked in Cape Town. Migrants preferred their children to be raised in India, where they were educated and retained their culture.⁷⁶ Furthermore, Indian wives were not always willing to make the journey to Cape Town but preferred the familiarity and security of their village homes. This changed after the South African government passed a new regulation in 1927 requiring a minor child from India to be accompanied by his/her mother. This was to prevent bogus sons from entering the country (see chapter 1). It was unlikely that a woman would accompany a ‘false’ son to Cape Town. After the minor children were safely settled in Cape Town, several of the wives returned to India.⁷⁷

Maria Jardim expresses her view of some husbands without their wives in Cape Town as follows:

They had too much of a party here ... [they] enjoyed themselves. A bunch of men, smoking and having buddies/friends ... they even used to make friends with South African women. There was a photo of my dad with a South African woman and she was Afrikaans. You know we used to tease him about it. So they made friends and like he said they couldn't communicate with each other properly because of the language barrier but they understood each other. So it was a group of them; it was friends and friends.⁷⁸

Estela Ferreira agreed by stating that ‘there are parties, they dance, they play music’.⁷⁹ David de Sousa, a third generation Madeiran in his mid-twenties, recalled a family member, now eighty years of age and who recently returned to Madeira, telling him about his experiences

⁷⁵ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Split-Households’, 655.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 654.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 655.

⁷⁸ Interview with Maria Jardim, 27 September 2017.

⁷⁹ Interview with Estela Ferreira, 7 September 2017.

living in Cape Town while his wife was in Madeira: ‘he slept with all these women... and used the opportunity before he brought his wife here, before he got shackled down, to enjoy his freedom’.⁸⁰ It is possible that with so much freedom in Cape Town, some husbands may have been reluctant to send for their wives. The older members of the family in Cape Town, usually an aunt or even a close friend would put pressure on them to send for their wives and children, because ‘you’ll be better if your family is here with you’.⁸¹ If the father of a young man was living in Cape Town, he ensured that his son would not wait too long before sending for his wife. This was motivated by the fear that his son would become involved with other women if he was alone in Cape Town.⁸²

The wives in Madeira were also under pressure to join their husbands. In one case, a wife postponed her journey to Cape Town to join her husband, because she was nervous of travelling by boat. Her parish priest told her that ‘your husband is sinning in Cape Town and it’s all your fault’.⁸³ This statement does indicate that extra-marital affairs were not unusual and recognised as such in Madeira. To minimize extra-marital affairs, family reunion as soon as possible was regarded as important in the eyes of the Catholic Church. A Polish priest working among Polish migrants in London during the early 2000s upholds this viewpoint of the Church by stating:

This re-unification of families is very important to me, because they are not copying the American model where the man leaves for work and has a double life. He has a woman and children there and sends money to the wife and children back in Poland. Here, the families are together, which is important.⁸⁴

Although the wives in Madeira who waited for their husbands to send for them lived in a conservative society, infused with religious orthodoxy, there is oral evidence that some of

⁸⁰ Interview with David de Sousa, 17 March 2018.

⁸¹ Interview with Maria Jardim, 27 September 2017.

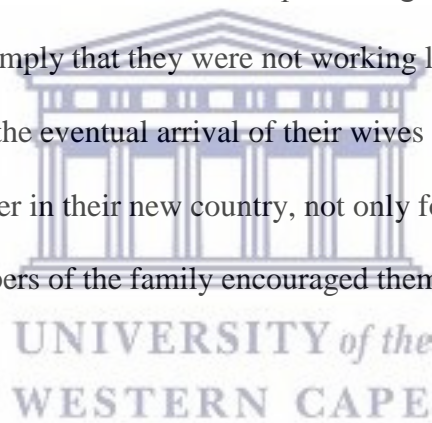
⁸² Interview with Maggie de Sousa, 7 February 2018.

⁸³ Interview with Benardete Caboz, 18 November 2017.

⁸⁴ Ryan *et al*, ‘Family Strategies and Transnational Migration’, 67.

them became involved in extra-marital affairs. It does not mean that a partner moved into the house, but the love affair took place clandestinely. However, the affair was difficult to hide, because ‘we literally lived on top of each other’.⁸⁵ If the affair became known, it would have caused a scandal within the village community and family rifts. The husband in Cape Town generally heard about the affair and disowned his wife. However, in a rare case, it was mentioned that a woman in Madeira, whose husband had not called for her, found another partner and became pregnant. The husband in Cape Town found out about this, but nevertheless called for his wife. When she arrived in Cape Town she gave birth to the child and her husband raised the child as his own.⁸⁶

Despite the ‘good time’ that some husbands were experiencing in Cape Town according to female narratives, it does not imply that they were not working long hours in the shop or on the sea and saving money for the eventual arrival of their wives and children. They held on to the idea that they had to prosper in their new country, not only for their own sakes, but also for their families. Older members of the family encouraged them to save and to buy a house and furniture.⁸⁷



Lidia Afonso recalled arriving in Cape Town in 1966. Her father had, after three years in the country, managed to buy two semi-detached houses in Maitland and had paid for the boat passage of his wife, two children and his mother. She explained that her father ‘worked incredibly long hours... lived very frugally and he saved his money... he knew what he wanted’.⁸⁸ This frugality and work ethic is similar to other emigrant groups. An observer noted that Polish migrants in London during the 2000s ‘save every pound, just save, save,

⁸⁵ Interview with Maria Virissimo, 22 January 2018.

⁸⁶ Interview: Celia Afonso, 14 August 2017. Other interviewees who mentioned extra-marital affairs of wives in Madeira were Estela Ferreira, 7 September 2017 and Maria Virissimo, 22 January 2018.

⁸⁷ Interview with Maria Jardim, 27 September 2017.

⁸⁸ Interview with Lidia Afonso, 14 August 2017.

save. For example, they eat the cheapest food. They live in flats with five people in a room. They are hard-working.’⁸⁹

In most cases, Madeiran husbands did send for their wives and children and they were proud of their financial achievements while separated from their family. They realised that Cape Town presented opportunities for them and their family and if they did not make a success of these opportunities what other alternatives would there be for them?

Marriages in Cape Town and Proxy Marriages

Young men in their late teens and twenties also emigrated to Cape Town. After a few years, a time came in their lives when they decided to marry and have a family in their new homeland. It was unusual for the pioneer Madeirans to marry outside of their cultural background. In most cases it was unaffordable to travel to Madeira to seek a bride and a practical option was to marry a second-generation Madeiran in Cape Town. However, as already mentioned, in the early years of migration, second generation Madeiran women were not plentiful in Cape Town.

Single men returned to Madeira for a brief period to find a wife, with the family playing a role in this regard. The parents of a young man advised him of a young woman ‘who is respectable, dresses in a decent way, and doesn’t get involved with guys, because if you go around with guys you are no good’.⁹⁰ Mahler and Pessar point to the fact that reputation was important, as ‘adolescent girls shoulder not only their families’ reputations but also carry those of their entire ethnic group’.⁹¹ This was true of young Madeiran women on how they were perceived and expected to behave.

⁸⁹ Louise Ryan *et al*, ‘Family Strategies and Transnational Migration’, 65.

⁹⁰ Interview with Filomena Francisco, 31 July 2017.

⁹¹ Sarah J. Mahler and Patricia R. Pessar, ‘Gender Matters’, 36

Marriage by proxy⁹² was unique to the Madeiran experience, brought about by a set of practical circumstances. Although it was preferable for a man to go to Madeira to find a wife, this was not always feasible due to the cost of travel and work commitments. In comparison to Madeiran males, many Indian migrants had already found their partners in India, as child marriages were common. They would be pledged to marry as young as eight, with the marriages consummated on reaching puberty.⁹³

Like the Madeirans, Indians were expected to marry within their culture, but for them it was more restrictive. In Cape Town, as in the caste- segmented villages in India, inter-caste marriages were not favoured among Hindus. The younger generation Indians challenged these perceived out-dated proscriptions. It was only in the late 1980s that these marriages become more acceptable in Cape Town.⁹⁴

Maria dos Santos recalled that her husband- to- be was in Cape Town and he remembered his neighbours' daughter and showed an interest in her. He wrote to his parents and they remembered that Maria was hard-working, as she was always the one to do the washing at the irrigation channel ('levada'). Of importance also, was that she came from a good family. The parents considered that she was the right woman for their son to marry. She married by proxy, wearing a wedding gown and a small reception was held after the marriage ceremony. (See Figure 5.) A year after the marriage she joined her husband in Cape Town. This was an unusually brief period when compared to other cases.

⁹² A proxy marriage refers to somebody, usually a family member, standing in for the groom at the marriage ceremony. In the Madeiran context of this paper, the groom would be in South Africa, while the bride would be in Madeira. See also the Code of Canon Law, Chapter IV, Can. 1105, 'Matrimonial Consent'.

⁹³ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'India-South Africa Mobilities', 169.

⁹⁴ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Gujarati Shoemakers', 181.



Figure 5: Marriage by proxy in Madeira. Bride with family members. (Dos Santos family photograph collection).

In the case mentioned, the young man and woman had knowledge of each other and the parents did not arrange the marriage but advised the son; he had the option not to marry. The young woman's family would have realised the advantages of marrying a man already established in Cape Town and doing well for himself and she would have little choice but to succumb to family pressure to enter into marriage. For the young woman it was an arranged marriage, with the difference that the couple were not complete strangers to each other.

It also happened that women married in court⁹⁵ by proxy in Madeira and then married in church after their arrival in Cape Town. The marriage ceremony would be followed by a lavish reception.⁹⁶ It was unthinkable that marriage would be complete without a religious

⁹⁵ A court (civil) marriage would enable the wife to enter the country if her husband was legally in South Africa. The couple may have decided to have sacramental union (church marriage) when both were together.

⁹⁶ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

ceremony. It also occurred that if somebody in Cape Town wished to bring a female family member to Cape Town from Madeira, he asked a friend to marry the family member by proxy in court to ensure her easy entry into the country. When the 'wife' arrived, she would live separately from her 'husband' and divorce after a year.⁹⁷ From the point of view of the Church, it was not a sacramental union and therefore divorce was permitted.

An arranged marriage, in the proper sense, would be seen 'as an agreement between two families rather than two individuals ...'⁹⁸ This contrasts with a culture which 'is primarily individualistic, viewing people as independent, free, and responsible for themselves ...'⁹⁹ A second-generation Madeiran in Cape Town recalled that a husband was picked for her by her parents. At twenty years of age her father took her by train to Johannesburg to formally meet her husband-to-be. The latter returned to Cape Town with the father and the daughter and after a year he married the daughter. In this case, a marriage was arranged between the families, with the daughter having no decision in the matter. It was an unhappy marriage, with little communication between the spouses, which the wife had to bear until she eventually divorced her husband in the early 1960s after nine years of marriage. She re-married in court three years after her divorce. It was a happy marriage and the couple had a religious ceremony after the first husband died – a Catholic ceremony was not possible while the first husband was still alive.¹⁰⁰

Marriage was also arranged by photograph. A case is related of a man in Cape Town seeking a wife from Madeira. His best friend showed him a photo of his niece and he became interested in her as a marriage partner, although he was twenty years her senior. The mother

⁹⁷ Interview with Manuel Alves, 25 April 2018.

⁹⁸ Jayamala Madathil and James M. Benschhoff, 'Importance of Marital Characteristics and Marital Satisfaction: A Comparison of Asian Indians in Arranged Marriages and Americans in Marriages of Choice', *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, Vol. 16 No. 3, 2008, 223

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁰⁰ Conversation on 3 January 2018. The respondent preferred to remain anonymous (b).

of the girl in Madeira was not happy because of the age difference. Despite this, she went to the village of the man wanting her daughter's hand in marriage and enquired about his character and whether he came from a good family. She eventually agreed to the marriage and the daughter married by proxy and met her husband for the first time after arriving in Cape Town.¹⁰¹ Many couples met for the first time at the Cape Town dock and it was not always what they had expected. In some instances, it happened that the man had sent a photograph of himself when he was younger and when the young woman arrived in Cape Town, she was shocked to see that her husband was much older than she had expected.¹⁰²

In another case which took place in the early 1960s, a couple in Cape Town had a son of twenty-three years of age, who was known as a 'party guy' and was never short of girlfriends. His parents were afraid that he would 'go off the tracks' and wanted him to settle down. On a visit to their village in Madeira the parents met a young girl of nineteen years of age. They regarded her as the right girl for their son and sent him a photograph of her. He agreed to marry her, undoubtedly through pressure from the parents – he was working for his father, which made him more vulnerable to parental pressure. The young girl returned to Cape Town with the young man's parents and they had a church wedding shortly afterwards. The marriage went through problems, but the couple did not divorce, but had the marriage annulled.¹⁰³ The father of the son had to make a statement that it had been an arranged marriage. The Catholic Church recognised arranged marriages as grounds for annulments.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

¹⁰² Interview with Celia Afonso, 6 August 2017 and Benardete Caboz, 18 November 2017.

¹⁰³ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018. Maggie de Sousa also mentioned that the Catholic Church granted an annulment in the case of an arranged marriage.

¹⁰⁴ An annulment (a nullity decree) is a ruling that the mutual marriage consent was defective, that is, something was gravely wrong at the time the wedding vows were made and it prevented a valid marriage from coming into existence. The rules governing annulments are expressed in the document 'Code of Canon Law'. See also the Apostolic Letter (2015) *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* ('The Lord Jesus, the Gentle Judge'). Each case is heard by a Diocesan Tribunal, which functions in each diocese of a country.

It is evident that parental pressure on the choice of marriage partners for their children is far less common today than in previous decades, but it still exists. The writer can remember speaking to a young woman in 2007 who was studying for the Anglican priesthood. She had been going out with a Portuguese boy-friend. His parents were not happy with his choice of partner and instructed him to leave her or they would disinherit him. He bowed to parental pressure, by having nothing more to do with the young woman. In this case, it was the religious aspect and that the young woman was not from a Portuguese background, which played the key roles in parental dissatisfaction.

Young women on the island of Kythera waited to get married, but it was difficult should the required dowry not be forthcoming. They were put under family pressure to take the ‘bride ship’ to Australia, where a family member had arranged a marriage to a Kytherian man much older than themselves. Arranged marriages usually brought young women a more comfortable life than the deprivation of their homeland.¹⁰⁵

Although arranged marriages amongst Madeirans no longer take place, it is still very evident in some cultures. Arranged marriages amongst Indian South Africans have also declined over time, with younger people more often choosing their own partner. In India though, 90% of all Indian marriages are arranged by parents or other family members. Marriages of choice, whereby couples first fall in love and then decide to marry, are discouraged, because it is considered that these marriages ‘might interfere with family closeness and prescribed familial obligations’. Indian arranged marriages are closely bound to economic, religious, political and social aspects.¹⁰⁶

When the wives eventually left for Cape Town with the children, there was sadness in leaving family and friends behind. For the children too, this was a new experience and there were

¹⁰⁵ Glytsos, ‘Changing Roles and Attitudes of Women’, 101.

¹⁰⁶ Madathil *et al*, ‘Importance of Marital Characteristics’, 222-223.

mixed feelings. Maria Jardim recalled that as a child she did not want to leave Madeira. She cried on arrival in Cape Town and asked her mother whether she can't go back to her grandmother in Madeira'.¹⁰⁷ Dulce Alves was twelve when she left and was excited at going somewhere new. She did not know that they were not coming back, but rather that they were going on a holiday to visit her father. At the dockside her two grandmothers gave her a pair of earrings, a ring and a rosary.¹⁰⁸ In all probability, they had borrowed the money to buy these gifts. Maria dos Santos was in her late teens and felt a sense of excitement and adventure about emigrating to a new country, which promised a better life of wealth and prosperity. Celia Afonso recalled her mother telling her that when she left Madeira her cousins were upset by her behaviour, because she was so eager to leave that she virtually ignored them, prompting them to remark in Portuguese: 'look, she just walks off, she's not worried about us'.¹⁰⁹

The journey from Funchal to Cape Town took fifteen days on a Portuguese boat such as the "Imperio" the "Angola" and the "Moçambique". These boats docked at all the Portuguese ports. The English boats such as the "Union Castle" and the "Cape Town Castle" took ten days.¹¹⁰ The pioneer Madeirans travelled almost exclusively third class and usually borrowed money from family to pay for their fare. This was paid back once they had started earning money in Cape Town and, for some, it would take several years to settle the debt.¹¹¹ Air travel became more fashionable in the 1960s, but the cost was prohibitive for most Madeirans.

We do not know first-hand how the older members of the family felt after the departure of children and grandchildren, whom they might never see again. The feelings of family left

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Maria Jardim, 27 September 2017.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Dulce Alves, 25 April 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Celia Afonso, 6 August 2017.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

behind in Madeira may have been similar to those experienced by Polish families after members had migrated: ‘Half of my heart is here, half there; it is terrible, it is simply terrible and it seems to me that it gets worse and worse’.¹¹²

Maria Virissimo vividly remembers sailing to Cape Town on the “Cape Town Castle” in 1965 as an eleven- year- old child:

I remember everything about the boat. It was beautiful, it was luxury; like going on a cruise. We’d go for our meals. Yes, it was breakfast, lunch, supper and afternoon tea. It was lovely. We slept with my mother in one of the cabins and that time you know, men were separate from the women, like for example I had brothers and they shared the cabin with males.¹¹³

Maria da Silva, a girl of seven years old, remembers leaving Madeira on the “Union Castle” in the 1950s:

And then I remember coming on this boat and climbing all those steps... I was scared because I remember those steps wouldn’t keep still, they were like shaking... I had ice-cream for the first time while on the boat; it was so nice you know and what I remember about the boat is when they opened the door to the dining- room it was like a palace to me; I had never seen anything like that before.¹¹⁴

Manuel Alves, as a four- year- old, remembers spending Christmas day on the boat. He recalls having an English Christmas party, which included Father Christmas. He did not know who Father Christmas was, and received a plastic mouth -organ as a gift.¹¹⁵ José

Ferreira, as an eleven-year-old, recalled going ashore in Las Palmes and having coca-cola for the first time. He did not want to go back on the boat, thinking that someone would fetch him and take him back to Madeira.¹¹⁶ These were all new experiences for the young children leaving Madeira and more would await them in Cape Town.

Several interviewees remembered the boat entering Table Bay harbour and the impression which this made on them. Maria Jardim remembered that while on the boat in the harbour,

¹¹² Ryan *et al*, ‘Family Strategies and Transnational Migration’, 72.

¹¹³ Interview with Maria Virissimo, 22 January 2018.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Maria da Silva (a), 10 September 2017.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Manuel Alves, 25 April 2017.

¹¹⁶ Conversation with José Ferreira, 8 September 2018.

her mother said to her in Portuguese: ‘there is your father down at the bottom waiting for us’.¹¹⁷ Then she had an emotional reaction seeing him there. Ligia Fernandes remembers the actual bay and the mountain as being ‘very impressive’.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted, where possible, to compare the experience of Madeirans with other ethnic groups such as Indians in Cape Town and Polish emigrants in London and found certain similarities and differences. Like the Madeirans, economic reasons provided the impetus for them to start a new life elsewhere. Chain migration characterised both Indian and Madeiran entry into South Africa. Usually, an established family member informed relative of opportunities in South Africa. In the early years Indians regarded their migration as temporary and circular, whereas Madeirans intended to leave their homeland permanently, establish themselves and then send for their wives and children. From the 1920s onwards, Indians began bringing out wives and children. In most cases, all the ethnic groups worked hard and lived frugally to make a better life for themselves. Marriage by proxy was unique to the Madeirans, whereas the Indians had already found partners in child marriages. Unlike the Madeirans, Indians were not attracted to Cape Town by the fishing trade, but rather by small scale business opportunities.

The chapter is also significant in its focus on the women left in Madeira for extended periods and waited for their husbands to call for them once established in Cape Town. This separation changed the role of the women left behind in Madeira and put a strain on the marital relationship, which, in some cases, led to extra-marital affairs and the abandonment of wives. If the Madeiran husband was in the country legally, there would be no difficulty for the wife to enter the country. This contrasts with the Indian wife, whose entry was restricted by a

¹¹⁷ Interview with Maria Jardim, 27 September 2017.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018.

lengthy process of documentary verification, a process complicated if the husband had multiple wives.

The next chapter will explore life in Cape Town for the Madeirans. The impact of this new and strange urban setting of Cape Town is summarised succinctly by Maria da Silva: ‘Eu estava confuso’ (‘I was confused’).¹¹⁹ They had to adapt quickly to their unfamiliar environment and to learn the local language to survive. Together with this, their strong work ethic contributed to their eventual upward mobility within Cape Town society.



¹¹⁹ Interview: Maria da Silva (b) on 6 September 2017.

CHAPTER THREE

MAKING LIVES IN CAPE TOWN

Introduction

The family picked us up [at the docks] and drove us don't ask me where and we ended up at home. We didn't know where it was ... we had a little welcome party. We had roast chicken, rice, peas and potatoes. That was our lunch when we arrived... it was like Christmas for us. We don't have chicken every day.¹

My dad had two cap-guns for me with caps. I'd never seen cap-guns in my life... he also had a red limousine for me ... I still remember the noise it made across the floor.²

These were the memories of two children on their first day in Cape Town from Madeira, one as a twelve-year-old and the other a four-year-old, arriving in 1968 and 1962 respectively.

This was the start of their long association in a new country with different social and religious values and unfamiliar languages. For a young mind, it was an exciting time, but also anomalous.

This chapter will consider the experiences of the wives and children of the settled husbands and fathers once they arrived in Cape Town from Madeira in the late 1950s and 1960s.

Although Madeirans had been arriving in Cape Town since the early 1900s, we do not have detailed sources about their lives in Cape Town. (See Figure 6.) Oral interviews at least

provide one with accounts of settling down for these later decades. For both the pioneer

Madeirans and Indians it was a period of adjustment to an unfamiliar environment and the

similarities and differences of their experiences will be highlighted. A glimpse into the lives

of children arriving from Madeira and India will also be brought to the fore. For the pioneer

Madeirans, it was important that the children integrate into their new society, yet they were

expected to retain their cultural and religious traditions.

¹ Interview with Dulce Alves, 25 April 2018.

² Interview with Manuel Alves, 25 April 2018.

It will be argued that although the lives of the wives of fishermen and shop owners who settled in Cape Town were different, each, in their own way, became important role-players in the home or in the business. It will further be argued that Madeiran and Indian organisations in Cape Town played and continue to play an important part in developing a sense of national identity amongst these ethnic groups. Finally, it will be argued that in comparison with the second generation, the third generation has mostly a tenuous association with Madeiran cultural and religious values.

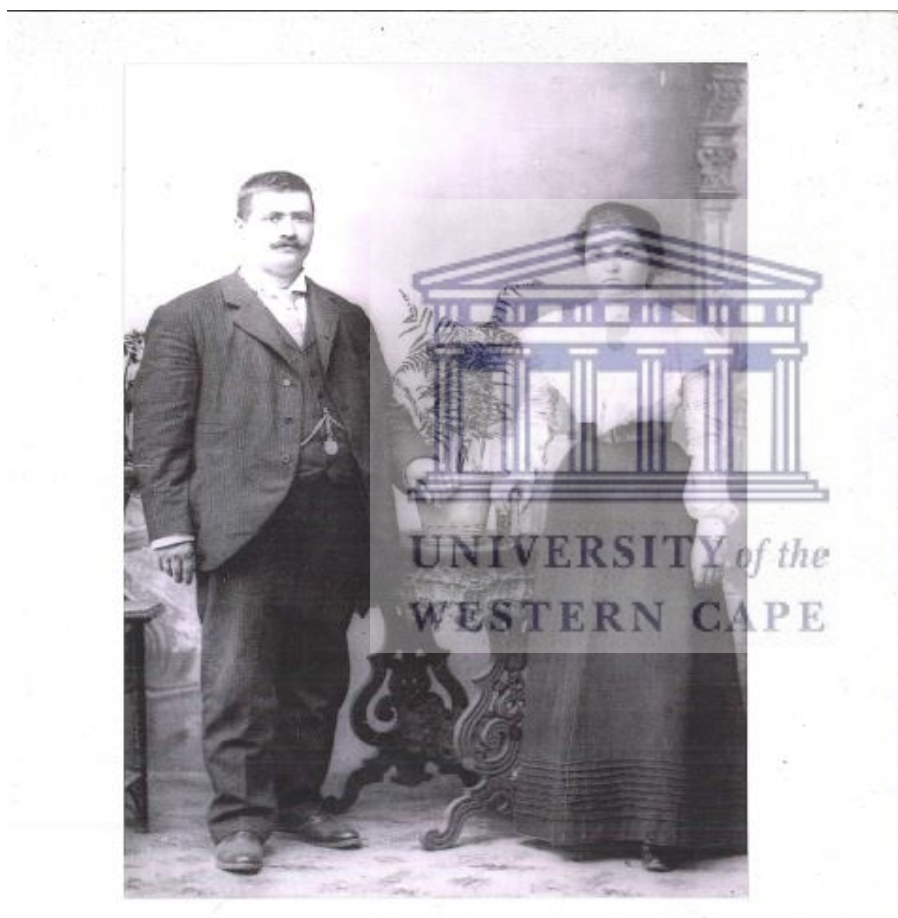


Figure 6: Madeiran immigrants to Cape Town in 1904. (McEvoy family photograph collection).

Life and Practices in Cape Town

The pioneer Madeirans who arrived in Cape Town and were involved in the fishing trade, settled in Woodstock and to a lesser extent in Green Point and University Estate. There were

sound practical reasons for their settlement in Woodstock. It was close to the harbour and the property prices were affordable.³ Also, the presence of a Catholic Church, St Agnes in Dublin Street, together with an impressive array of Catholic educational institutions⁴ in the area and nearby central Cape Town, proved additional reasons for settling in Woodstock. Furthermore, the large Portuguese concentration in Woodstock drew other Madeirans to the area, as it provided for them a sense of familiarity and security.

The Madeirans were a homogenous group, bound together by a common language and religion. Village rivalries were not part of the Madeiran experience, nor were village societies formed, because the small numbers from each village would not make the societies sustainable. From the 1940s onwards, 'clusters' of Madeiran-dominated streets emerged, rather than the whole of Woodstock becoming an ethnic suburb.⁵ This provided the ideal climate where Madeiran traditions, customs and practices of their island homeland were replicated.

Unlike the Madeirans, the Indians were not a homogenous group, but were divided, based on language, religion and village/region of origin. The diverse language groups included Gujarati, Konkani and Tamil. Religious groupings were the majority Muslims, with smaller numbers of Hindus and Christians.⁶ The Indian Muslim immigrants formed village societies, whereas the Gujarati Hindus from individual villages were too small to form separate societies. Resources were pooled to preserve their culture.⁷

³ Machado, 'Little Madeira', 17.

⁴ A junior school (St Agnes) for boys and girls and two secondary schools: St Aquinas College (since closed) for girls run by the Dominican Sisters and Christian Brothers' for boys (since closed) in Woodstock and two convents, St Mary's and St Bridget's, together with a vocational training school for boys (boarders), Salesians, in central Cape Town.

⁵ Machado, 'Little Madeira',

⁶ In the 1970 Government Census Report, it was found that in the Cape, 47% of Indians were Muslim, 27% Christian and 26% Hindu.

⁷ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Gujarati Shoemakers', 180.

Indians did not cluster in ethnic neighbourhoods but were dispersed throughout Cape Town. About 30% of the Indian population lived in District Six and the Woodstock-Salt River areas. The remainder lived along the Cape Town-Muizenberg route of communication, with a substantial number concentrated in the central southern suburbs.⁸ As will be seen later in the chapter, this would change with the implementation of apartheid legislation, with significant consequences for the Indians of Cape Town.

The Madeirans in Woodstock formed a close-knit community and did not assimilate readily with the Capetonians. They greeted their non-Portuguese neighbours and despite the communication barrier, attempted to say a few words to them. There were no close friendships nor the visiting of one another.⁹ The Madeirans considered the local people too open-minded, almost permissive, which did resonate well with their world-view. They looked primarily to their family and fellow Madeirans for support and social interaction. Those whose English language skills were poor, depended on family members or Madeiran friends to accompany them to the hospital, doctor or a lawyer for translation purposes.¹⁰ Solange Seixal, a second-generation Madeiran in her mid-twenties, whose parents emigrated to Cape Town in 1980, recalled her role in assisting her parents:

My parents couldn't speak English, so I had to take a very adult role; so I would have to translate for them. After learning to write my name one of the first things I learnt to write was a cheque. They would take me around with them when they went to meetings and banks etc, because they wouldn't be able to understand. So actually, it was quite difficult as a child growing up, because they couldn't speak English, so I couldn't get help with homework. They couldn't really be responsible for themselves.¹¹

This experience was similar to Madeiran children growing up in the 1960s and 1970s.

⁸ Rosemary Hill, 'The Impact of Race Legislation on Kinship and Identity amongst Indian Muslims in Cape Town' (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1980), 62-63.

⁹ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

¹⁰ Interview with Alberto Gonçalves, 26 July 2017.

¹¹ Interview with Solange Seixal, 6 May 2018.

There was the danger that the Madeirans in Woodstock would develop a ghetto mentality and be averse to integrate into their unfamiliar environment. This view was expressed by influential figures within the community, such as Bishop Antonio Dos Reis Rodrigues, National Director of the Portuguese Bishops' Commission for the Care of Emigrants. On a visit to Woodstock in April 1969, he expressed the opinion that '[w]e do not wish to form a ghetto, but gradually to become fully integrated into the life of South Africa, without losing the Faith or the moral and cultural values which we hold dear. We believe that we have a valuable contribution to make to the life of the country'.¹² The Madeirans have now moved away from Woodstock, with mostly older people remaining, but they still have a nostalgic connection to the area and attend important religious ceremonies at the parish church.

The Madeiran wives of fishermen usually stayed at home to look after the children. If they did work, which was not common, it was in shops owned by family members or by other Madeirans. Their lives were not easy, because they had to care for their usually large family without the support of a husband while he was fishing in South-West Africa for six months of the year. The wife took over the role and responsibilities of the husband and made all the household decisions and the disciplining of the children. This is reminiscent of the situation where the wife remained in Madeira and became head of the family and waited for her husband to call for her. Now in Cape Town, it was also a period of waiting for the husband to return from the sea. Furthermore, the wife would not be able to drive and therefore had to walk or take public transport wherever she wanted to go. This could be an alienating experience for the new immigrant in an unfamiliar setting, requiring 'constant mental strain to navigate and to be understood'.¹³

¹² *The Southern Cross Newspaper*, 16 April 1969, 16.

¹³ Charles Hirschman, 'The Role of Religion in the Origins and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States' in Alejandro Portes and Josh DeWind (eds.), *Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 395.

For those Madeirans who owned cafés or fish- and- chips outlets, they were dispersed across Cape Town, living close to their business and preferably above or next to their shop, if this type of accommodation was available. This was the same as the Indians, with the difference that in the early years, the Gujarati shoemaker caste would determine among themselves in which area each would open a shop to eliminate competition.¹⁴ This was a practical way of protecting one another's business interests.

Owning fish- and- chips shops, although traditionally British, became popular amongst the Madeirans in Cape Town. This was not only because they were involved in the fishing trade. The only items sold in the fish shop were fish, chips and rolls and it therefore did not require much knowledge of English to successfully run the business.

It was more difficult serving customers in a café selling a wide range of items. Although there was initially a communication problem in dealing with customers they learnt quickly to make themselves understood in English. In some instances, Madeirans working in the shops learnt to speak Afrikaans and isiXhosa as well.¹⁵ The wives, through their interaction with customers, were less isolated in comparison with fishermen's wives. They also learnt new skills, such as the running of a small-scale business.

The women worked hard and long hours in the shop, with little time left for socialising. This aspect was mentioned by several interviewees. Hermenegilda Correia related that a woman 'worked like a dog from Monday to Saturday. On Sunday [she] does not go out ... just work like a dog at home to wash, iron to put everything right for children to go to school'.¹⁶

Furthermore, if the wife worked in the fish- and- chips shop, the husband would buy the fish in the morning and then go into the bar and have a good time and come back to the shop not

¹⁴ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Gujarati Shoemakers', 177.

¹⁵ Interview with Filomena Francisco on 31 July 2017.

¹⁶ Interview with Hermenegilda Correia, 18 November 2017.

completely sober.¹⁷ Glaser, writing about Madeiran women living in Johannesburg, quotes an interviewee who recalled that '[h]usbands who used to go out drinking and leave their wives from morning 'til night in the shop... alone in the shop... and what can you do?' Work was from 'Monday to Monday... no Sundays... after church you go back to bloody work'.¹⁸

Connie De Souza recalled that her parents owned a shop in Diep River and that the family lived in a house next to the shop. Her father opened the shop at 06:00 and her mother came to the shop at 07:00. Thereafter, her father went and bought fish for the shop and once a week purchased fruit and vegetables at the market. After returning, he sat in the shop (never serving customers) and in the afternoon, he went and slept. The wife worked in the shop until it closed between 22:00 and 23:00. She worked from Monday to Sunday and never had a holiday.¹⁹ Furthermore, there was a bioscope a block away from the shop and when there was a midnight show, the wife remained in the shop until the show ended, hoping that customers would come into the shop to purchase a few items after the show.²⁰

Manuel Alves believes that the wife was 'the anchor in the business'. She was always in the shop, while the husband would go to the market to buy fruit and vegetables for the shop and then go to his friends. He felt comfortable leaving his wife in the business, rather than an employee, because she could be trusted.²¹ There were exceptions to the narratives that have been sketched, and which unsettle the usual view found in the literature and in the minds of people.

Estela Ferreira related that her parents worked as a team in their shop. Her father went occasionally to the early morning market to buy the vegetables and came back to the shop

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Glaser, 'Home, Farm and Shop', 892.

¹⁹ Interview with Connie De Souza, 10 October 2017.

²⁰ Conversation with Philomena McEvoy, 8 January 2018.

²¹ Interview with Manuel Alves, 25 April 2018 and discussion with José Ferreira on 8 September 2018.

and remained there with his wife until the shop closed at 20:00/21:00.²² This strong partnership between husband and wife ensured the growth of the business into a successful venture. She believed that it was the wife who ‘made things happen’ and was dedicated to the business. She remembered an incident which, after so many years, is still entrenched in her mind:

And somebody came into the shop and wanted either tea or coffee and my mother poured it into a bottle [which the customer had brought] and the bottom fell out of the bottle and burnt her on the front of her leg. I remember going to the kitchen and seeing my mother crying and she tore the stocking off her foot. She walked to Adderley Street to catch a taxi to go to Woodstock hospital. They wrapped her leg and what did she do? She went back to the shop to work and later the leg got infected and she ended up in hospital for some time.²³

This partnership and understanding between husband and wife was also expressed by Maria Virissimo. She only worked for part of the day and then went home to do other domestic duties.²⁴ An interviewee mentioned the value of having a mother at home most of the day:

My mother was 80% of the time a housewife. I think there was a special relationship between my mother and father. My father understood that she did not want to work in the shop and was very understanding of that. My mother never enjoyed working in the shop. She helped because it was necessary... I had a mother at home who brought us up, myself, my brother and my sister all the way from babies to teenagers. That made a huge difference in my family life and my understanding of the family.²⁵

Maggie de Sousa stated that her mother did not work in the family business, but stayed at home to look after the children and performed quotidian household tasks. This was an extremely rare case of the wife not working in the business at all. Her father went to the market at 04:00/05:00 and closed the shop late in the evening. This arduous work was the only means to build up the business.²⁶ Alberto Gonçalves expressed his view on the pioneer Madeirans as follows:

²² Interview with Estela Ferreira, 7 September 2017.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Interview with Maria Virissimo, 22 January 2018.

²⁵ Anonymous (b) interviewed, 26 April 2018.

²⁶ Interview with Maggie de Sousa, 7 February 2018.

My dad was a carpenter and when he came over he went to work for my uncle and got involved in the green grocer business and then while working there my uncle got involved in buying another business and of course family got involved. Brothers would get involved and buy a business together, but a lot of feuds started out as well. Things were tough in those days and if one brother did better than the other it caused friction and jealousy. My dad worked hard for my uncle, got money and saved so he could buy his own business and that's how they moved on. They worked at least eighteen hours a day, then you had your sleep and rest after that. So family life was quite difficult because you were working every day of the week.²⁷

Why were some wives 'forced' to work long hours in the business while the husbands were out enjoying themselves, while in other cases the husband and wife worked together as a team in the business? Did it depend on the marital relationship or did villages in Madeira have different attitudes towards women? Or is this 'exploitation' of some wives discernible in all cultures? Whatever the answers to these questions may be, the unpaid labour of women contributed significantly to the success of the family business. Silvia Pedraza argues that 'women's contribution is the key to the success of these enterprises [family businesses] and to the achievement of the *petit bourgeois* class position'.²⁸ Despite the contribution of the women, Celia Afonso commented that in her opinion 'the men would never acknowledge the power and strength that the women had. You know, in front of his friends I have succeeded, I am the hard worker. They never acknowledge the wife'.²⁹ This statement is not dissimilar to the view of Glaser, as he states that 'the role of women in the domestic sphere is glorified by the community, their contribution to the family economy often goes unrecognised'.³⁰

The experiences of the Indian women arriving in Cape Town were similar to that of Madeiran women. The Cape Town setting provided the first- generation immigrant woman with new opportunities and the potential to develop new skills, and thereby moving beyond domesticity. Many of the women, out of necessity, assisted their husbands in the shops and

²⁷ Interview with Alberto Gonçalves, 26 July 2017.

²⁸ Silvia Pedraza, 'Women and Migration: The Social Consequences of Gender', *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 17, 1991, 318.

²⁹ Interview with Celia Afonso, 6 August 2017.

³⁰ Glaser, 'Home, Farm and Shop', 896.

were also confronted with the difficulty of not being able to converse in English or Afrikaans. In Cape Town, Gujarati wives were taught the skill of repairing shoes. Again, this was out of necessity and not a belief in gender equality by the husband. It was possible to save on wages to employees and to contribute to the family economy. For the husband, there was pride in what the wife had achieved.³¹ Through their labour, Indian women contributed significantly towards the family income and like Madeiran women, they played a significant role in Indian upward mobility within Cape Town society.

The importance of the family business can be illustrated by the Madeiran practice of making special arrangements for marriages in the family to take place on a Sunday instead of a Saturday. On a Sunday most of the Madeiran shops were closed, and the marriage would therefore not disrupt the activities of the business.³² People received their pay on a Friday and a Saturday would be a busy day for the shop-owners. For the pioneer Madeirans, their lives revolved around the business, because they ‘had to make money in a foreign country... to give the children the best education’.³³ Irrespective of whether Madeiran women were the wives of fishermen or shop-owners, when they arrived in Cape Town they were interested in providing ‘a good home, good food on the table and good family life...that’s the basis of it and they will work towards that’.³⁴

Fathers played a role in involving their sons in the business from an early age. From the age of five years ‘it was my duty to pack the window full of bread rolls and French rolls... with my other duty of packing the juice fridge...’³⁵ Also, the father taught the son important lessons in preparation for their eventual taking over from him or starting his own business.

These lessons were always remembered and put into practice: ‘My father taught me well, no

³¹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Gujarati Shoemakers’, 182.

³² Interview with Benardete Caboz, 18 November 2017.

³³ Interview with Maggie de Sousa, 7 February 2018.

³⁴ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018.

³⁵ ‘From Palace Fisheries to Seafood Palace’, *Amigos Portugueses*, 2016, 73.

time to play ... polite, clean service is very important and don't compromise. Quality my son, I can still hear him say and this is what I teach my staff'.³⁶

A second- generation Madeiran in his late thirties commented about working in his father's shop when he was growing up:

I would assist in the shop and get paid a small wage as well. It was a family business, so you would assist. It does not take a lot of brains to work out that you are being provided for by the shop, so you have to look after the business...so as a youngster I still remember serving my first customer at the age of six... as soon as I could reach the till they let me serve the customers.³⁷

José Ferreira recalled working during the 1970s in the London café after school and over week-ends. He had to fill containers with paraffin and weigh the sugar. After this, he served customers. For the long hours of work, he was paid R12 a month. He mentioned that this life was 'very tough.' An advantage of working in the shop was that he managed to learn English, which assisted him at school.³⁸ Parents instilled a strong work ethic in their children from an early age.

The Madeiran practice of drawing on the labour of (usually male) children was like that of Indian shop- owners in Cape Town. In an interview, Dhupelia-Mesthrie documents the memories of two brothers working in their father's shoe repair shop as children in the 1950s:

And the bell used to go and we had to come down soon after school and...Saturday Sunday there wasn't play time for us. ... Saturday was to serve customers. After that I used to polish and clean the shop and prepare for... Monday. Sunday [we] used to go to the shop. Bhadra used to always do all the book work always the administration work and I used to always... [be in] the repair section. So that's how we picked up.³⁹

For the Madeirans, if extra help was required in the shop, somebody from their ethnic group would be employed, because 'they were regarded as being more trustworthy and harder

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁷ Anonymous (b) interviewed, 26 April 2018.

³⁸ Conversation with José Ferreira, 8 September 2018.

³⁹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Gujarati Shoemakers',

working'.⁴⁰ Indian shopkeepers also preferred young male shop assistants from India, whom they knew from their villages, rather than employees from the local population.⁴¹ This enabled better communication between employer and employees in a language which they all understood and coming from the same cultural background, they would relate better to one another. The South Africans also regarded the Madeirans as hard-working and reliable. In the case of Juvenal Isidoro de Abreu, the owner (a Mrs McPhee) of the Newhaven Hotel, Knysna, wrote as follows:

Mr. Abreu has now worked for me for a period of three months. During this time he has taken complete control of my hotel and runs the liquor and catering services. I have found him most efficient in all respects and far better than many S. African staff that I have tried out in the past who do not seem to be able to come up to the hoteliers standard of handling public and staff etc. He can speak several languages and although he has been in S. Africa for a short period he is already learning to speak Afrikaans to many of our customers.⁴²

This testimonial, dated the 20th March 1956, points to the work ethic of the Madeirans and the realisation that learning the official languages of the country would facilitate their integration into local society.

Attitudes towards Madeirans

Antonio da Silva Rodrigues, referring to the work of M. da Silva, observed that 'often Madeirans lived in a 'paradox' benefitting from their racial classification status, but at the same time being resented and disliked by the local populace'.⁴³ The Madeirans were aware that their racial classification as white brought them certain benefits. They had access to excellent schools, universities, health care facilities and public amenities. Furthermore, they had the legal right to buy property and open businesses in any part of central Cape Town.

⁴⁰ Machado 'Little Madeira', 38.

⁴¹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'The Passenger Indian as Worker', 119.

⁴² WCA: PIO 1719, 75648e. File of Juvenal Isidoro de Abreu.

⁴³ M.T.S. da Silva, "Sea Kaffirs" ou "brancos coloniais". Unpublished dissertation, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, Brazil, quoted in Antonio da Silva Rodrigues, 'An Archival Collecting Framework', 57.

This caused resentment from the Coloured and Indian businessmen, who, because of apartheid legislation, were barred from operating in “white” areas. These were the most sought- after parts of the town for the establishment of a successful business.⁴⁴

Maria da Silva, who grew up in Woodstock, recalled an incident which is still clear in her memory:

I remember that my sister and I used to walk home from school [St Agnes, Woodstock] ... and I remember that my sister became like sort of friends with a girl. I don't know if she was Coloured or Indian. Then one day when I came past her house ... the door was open and she was screaming and shouting. I didn't know what's going on with this girl. I was young myself. Then apparently it was when they were told they had to get out of Woodstock. I didn't know nothing. Do you know what nothing is; nothing was about anything because we weren't politicians and she said: 'because of you, because of you now we've got to get out, you are to blame'. The mother, I can never forget the mother... she said 'no, it's not because of them, you know it's not because of them'. I went home shaking.⁴⁵

The proclamation of Woodstock as a white group area⁴⁶ led to coloureds and Indians having to leave and da Silva's recollection points to the bitterness felt by those who left. Although there were many similarities between Indians and Madeirans, apartheid ensured a different experience for them, with Indians facing relocation.

Rylands was declared an Indian group area in 1957, displacing Africans, coloureds, Malays and a few whites. Indians who lived in newly proclaimed coloured or white areas had to leave for Rylands, with its lack of infrastructure. Places of worship had to be built by the Indian Muslim and Hindu communities,⁴⁷ whereas Madeirans had well-established Catholic churches and educational facilities when they moved into Woodstock and elsewhere.

⁴⁴ Maria Victoria Pereira, 'Religion, Identity and Community – The Religious Life of Portuguese Women in Durban', (MA thesis, University of South Africa, 2000), 43.

⁴⁵ Interview with Maria da Silva (a), 10 September 2017.

⁴⁶ A large part of Woodstock was declared a White area on 19 July 1968. The large part of the proclaimed area was bordered by Durham Avenue, Guthrie Road, Queen's Park Road and Salt River Road. The Wesley Teachers' Training College and Primary School complexes with eight hundred Coloured students and pupils fell within the White area and eventually had to close. A statement by the Department of Community Development and Planning referred to the proclamation of Group Areas as 'a positive step'.

⁴⁷ Two mosques were built in Rylands and two Hindu temples, which are the only temples in Cape Town.

Furthermore, permits to continue operating their businesses in coloured and white areas were mostly denied, causing much hardship. Hill documents the distress that enforced removals caused:

Mr. Sunday, in his late fifties, lived with his wife and twenty-five-year-old niece in an affluent White suburb. Mr. Sunday worked as a blockman in a butchery, augmenting his income by cooking for weddings and encouraging his wife and niece to take in sewing to do at home. ... [t]hey were then issued with an order to leave and to live in an Indian area. At that time, in the early 1970s, the building boom had not yet started in Rylands, but enough other Indians had been evicted to cause an unprecedented housing shortage. Mr. Sunday could find nowhere for his small family to live. ... [f]or some days they had to go from door to door, begging to be allowed to sleep on the verandah or in the garden. With all the anxiety Mr. Sunday suffered from a severe heart attack, remaining several months in hospital. ... [t]he horror of his situation rendered him manic depressive, and for many years afterwards he was considered by his wife and niece to be insane at times.⁴⁸

Despite unfortunate cases such as these, there were positive aspects to the removal to Rylands. Indian businessmen with foresight realised that the area would develop and became major landowners, building semi-detached houses and leasing it out. Furthermore, while the Indians preserved their religious and cultural practices, this assumed an intensity once settled in Rylands.⁴⁹ A more acute awareness of their Indianness became apparent.

Due to the large concentration of Madeirans in Woodstock, the Church appointed a permanent Portuguese priest (Fr. A.F. da Luz) in Woodstock in 1966. An ethnic priest emphasised religious days that were important and familiar to the Madeiran community, thereby creating a distinctively Portuguese religious culture.⁵⁰ This would not have happened had the Madeirans been dispersed throughout Cape Town.

As has been shown, Madeirans were not considered absolutely white by some sections of white South Africans. This had to do not only with their darker skin complexion and low

⁴⁸ Hill, 'The Impact of Race Legislation on Kinship and Identity', 90.

⁴⁹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Cultural Crossings from Africa to India', 295.

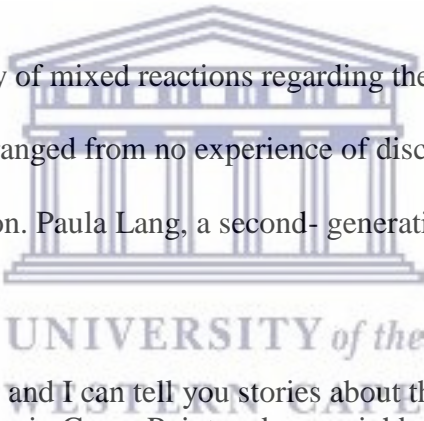
⁵⁰ Machado, 'Little Madeira', 49.

level of education, but also that they performed tasks not requiring high levels of skill.

However, being white brought its own share of problems.

Ferreira and Le Roux state that the Madeirans were frequently ‘deur rassistiese Afrikaners met die dubbelaanstootlike term as “seekaffers” uitgekryt is’ (‘were denounced by racist Afrikaners with the double reprehensible term of “sea-kaffirs”).⁵¹ Other epithets by which they were referred to included “stinkvis” (“stink fish”).⁵² Furthermore, a report by Groenewald and Smedley in 1977, found that only 1,6% of respondents from the white population group (male and female) regarded the Portuguese as the most preferable as neighbours.⁵³ Cases have been documented where some Afrikaans families moved out when a Portuguese family moved into their neighbourhood.⁵⁴

Interviewees provided a variety of mixed reactions regarding the question of discrimination against them. These reactions ranged from no experience of discrimination to indifference to strong feelings of discrimination. Paula Lang, a second-generation Madeiran, mentioned her experience:



We were looked down on and I can tell you stories about that. We were Portuguese and we moved into a house in Green Point and our neighbours were all English and they looked down on us as you’re regarded as being dirty... we had to grow up with that stigma of being Portuguese. [F]or a time period in my life I would not tell people I was Portuguese for the simple reason that I had this perception about being Portuguese until one day I worked with a guy and he was Jewish and he told me about his hard life that he had. He went to Wynberg Boys High and how the boys used to give him a hard time because he was Jewish and he vowed that his children would go to a Jewish school where they didn’t have to get the treatment that he got and he said to me: ‘Paula, be proud of your heritage and be proud of your background’.⁵⁵

⁵¹ O.J.O Ferreira & Schalk W. le Roux, *SAGRES & SUIDERKRUIS: Raakpunte Tussen Portugal en Suid-Afrika deur Vyf Eeue*, (Gordonsbaai: Adamastor, 2009), 161.

⁵² Interview with Lidia Afonso, 14 August 2017.

⁵³ D. Groenewald and L.N. Smedley, *Attitudes of the White Population in South Africa Towards Immigrants in General and the Main Immigrant Groups in Particular* (Pretoria: South African Human Sciences Research Council, 1977), 97.

⁵⁴ Pereira, ‘Religion, Identity and Community’, 42.

⁵⁵ Interview with Paula Lang, 10 September 2017.

From the instances mentioned, the Madeirans were regarded as socially inferior by segments of the white population in Cape Town up until at least the late 1970s.

It was not only the mostly Afrikaans-speaking whites who held the Madeirans in low esteem. Nigel Webb, in an article, refers to one of his informants stating that '[t]he continentals [from Portugal] consider us Madeirans as 'poor relations'. They look down on our accent and consider us to come from a poor and undeveloped area'.⁵⁶ This was the general view held by interviewees. Furthermore, some Portuguese Angolans also considered the Madeirans as socially inferior and referred to them as having a "fish- and- chips" shop mentality.⁵⁷ Pamila Gupta documents the attempts of the highly educated Portuguese Angolans to distance themselves from the "Madeiran shopkeeper types", but despite this, they could not escape the stereotypical image which the South Africans had of the Madeirans.⁵⁸

Madeirans, arriving in a new country, did not only have to overcome language and adaptation difficulties, but were confronted by unfamiliar racial policies. In a study, Gupta relates the experiences of Portuguese migrants from Angola to Johannesburg at the beginning of decolonization in 1975. On their arrival, they 'had to learn to be white'.⁵⁹ This was the same for the Madeirans arriving in Cape Town from the 1950s onwards. During that decade, a spate of apartheid legislative measures was enacted.⁶⁰ José Ferreira recalled that in 1969 when he arrived in Cape Town as a child, his father explained to him that it was against the law to mix with black people and that there were separate beaches, residential areas, buses

⁵⁶ Nigel Webb, 'Home Across the Atlantic? Views on the Maintenance of the Portuguese Culture in Port Elizabeth, South Africa', *Society in transition*, 1999, 30 (1), 45.

⁵⁷ Pamila Gupta, 'Departures of Decolonization: Interstitial Spaces, Ordinary Affect, and Landscapes of Victimhood in Southern Africa', in Steffen Jensen and Hendrik Ronsbo (eds), *Histories of Victimhood* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 207.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁶⁰ The following are examples: Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No 55 of 1949, Immorality Amendment Act, Act No 21 of 1950; amended in 1957 (Act 23), Population Registration Act, Act No 30 of 1950, Group Areas Act, Act No 41 of 1950, Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953.

and trains for whites and blacks. In addition to explaining the racial policies of the country, José's father emphasised that certain Portuguese words were not to be used, because these words sounded like obscene words in English.⁶¹

The racial classification of Madeirans is still an issue in our present society. A second-generation Madeiran in her mid-twenties elaborates:

South African people have this idea that Portuguese aren't white. For instance, I was not allowed to go to a friend's home because her father was racist and he hated Portuguese people... apparently I wasn't white enough. It's something I've experienced my whole life, even at university... they will say things to me like why don't you just re-categorise yourself to coloured, because that's what Portuguese people are and you can benefit from BEE [Black Economic Empowerment]. It's a mistake that you are actually classified as white, because you are supposed to be coloured.⁶²

This quote illustrates the paradox of Madeirans' place in a racially hierarchical society in the past, with the dilemmas of being white in the democratic society.

Replicating Madeiran Values and Practices in the Home

As in Madeira, there was differential treatment between adolescent boys and girls. Girls remained at home and were closely monitored, protected against public exposure, while boys were granted much more freedom to do as they pleased, provided that they did not compromise the family name in any way. Maria Virissimo gave an illuminating perspective of growing up in Cape Town in the 1960s/early 1970s:

People were more outgoing and more free here and obviously people [Madeirans] feared that their children were going to get involved with these people that were on drugs and that kind of thing. So that's why they protected their children and it is common sense. Some went overboard... don't say it was right, but understandable. I also had a very strict up-bringing but looking back I understand it better now that I have my own children and I think that what they did was trying to protect me. Although I'm not doing the same, I understand what they tried to do. I'm not going

⁶¹ Conversation with José Ferreira, 8 September 2018.

⁶² Interview with Solange Seixal, 6 May 2018.

to say that I hate my mother and father for what they did, but they did what they thought was right at the time. It would be different now.⁶³

This strict upbringing was mentioned by several interviewees. A second-generation Madeiran, now in her eighties, and growing up in Cape Town during the 1930s/40s, still vividly remembered that ‘I had to be with my mother all the time... I could not go out with friends ... it was a terrible life... my brothers could do as they pleased’.⁶⁴ Furthermore, a second-generation Madeiran remarked that in the late 1970s she was not allowed to go to her matriculation dance unless she was accompanied by a family member, in this case her cousin.⁶⁵ This strict upbringing is also evident in second generation Madeirans on the island of Jersey. Informants mentioned that as children they were not allowed to stay over at English friends’ homes, although sleep-overs were a common practice amongst their English friends.⁶⁶ This protective attitude is still evident in Cape Town. Solange Seixal recalled her primary and secondary school years in the 2000s:

I wasn’t allowed to sleep out, I wasn’t allowed to have boyfriends, I wasn’t allowed to go anywhere that my male cousin wasn’t going. If you’re going to a party your cousin better go with you to protect you... If you want to do anything we [the parents] have to go pick you up and meet the parents of whoever you’re going to see. It was very isolated.⁶⁷

Portes, Fernandez-Kelly and Haller argue that parental control over children in a new country wanes quickly and may have outcomes contrary to successful integration. These include dropping out of school, joining youth gangs and using or selling drugs. However, they stress that this trend can be minimised when parental expectations of their children are reinforced

⁶³ Interview with Maria Virissimo, 22 January 2018.

⁶⁴ Conversation with Maria Afonso, 3 January 2018.

⁶⁵ Interview with Maggie de Sousa, 7 February 2018.

⁶⁶ Mar-Molinero, ‘Family and Transmission’, 104. Madeirans started to arrive in Jersey as migrant workers in the 1960s. By 1975 there were over two thousand Madeirans on Jersey.

⁶⁷ Interview with Solange Seixal, 6 May 2018.

by others in the community i.e. by associating with other Madeiran families, joining cultural organisations and so forth.⁶⁸

Most interviewees agreed that it was the mother who passed the Madeiran culture and traditions to the next generation. This confirms Machado's observation that the mother is the cultural transmitter in the family.⁶⁹ This could partly be due to the father, if a fisherman, being away from home for six months of the year. The maintenance of the language was important.

The pioneer Madeirans could initially only speak Portuguese and it is therefore predictable that it was spoken in the home and that their children would learn the language.⁷⁰ McDuling refers to the close bond between mother and child and quotes Barnes who states that 'many mothers feel it only 'natural' to speak their mother tongue to their children even if it is not used in the community around them'.⁷¹ A second generation Madeiran, in his mid-fifties, recalled that 'when growing up in South Africa I know when I went to school I could only speak Portuguese. In the shop my English was just enough to understand'.⁷²

Parents often worked in the shop from Monday to Sunday and a domestic looked after the children. In these cases, the children only learned the odd Portuguese word when the parents came home in the evening. It is evident that the wives of fishermen would be at home with the children all day and they would become proficient in the language and have a stronger identification with Madeiran culture and values. If the grandmother lived with the family, and

⁶⁸ Alenjandro Portes, Patricia Fernández-Kelly and William J. Haller, 'Segmented Assimilation on the Ground: The New Second Generation in Early Adulthood', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28, 6, 2005, 1008 and 1014.

⁶⁹ Machado, 'Little Madeira' 54- 56.

⁷⁰ Manuel Alves recalled that arriving in Cape Town as a child, he thought that everybody here could speak Portuguese. When his mother sent him the first time to the shop to buy bread, he spoke to the shop-assistant in Portuguese.

⁷¹ Allistair McDuling, 'Language Shift and Maintenance in the Portuguese Community of Johannesburg' (MA thesis, University of South Africa, 2000),45. (quotes LA Barnes, 'Family bilingualism: A review of the literature' in *South African Journal of Linguistics*, 8,4, 143-148).

⁷² Interview with Alberto Gonçalves, 26 July 2017.

looked after the children, I would argue that she was the main cultural transmitter in the family. The grandchildren learnt to speak Portuguese and she prepared the food according to the Portuguese tradition. Furthermore, an interviewee stated that her grandmother ‘... taught me to clean the house and how to keep the home... how to be a housewife eventually’.⁷³

Indian women also played a key role in promoting religion and culture. For example, Hindu women arranged religious festivals such as Diwali and Navratri. They also played a key role in collecting funds for the building of the temple in Rylands. This was done by having rummage sales and selling food such as rotis and curries. On a social level, the women arranged the screening of Tamil films, held concerts with an Indian theme and hosted sari queen contests.⁷⁴

For the Madeirans who came out as children, the speaking of only Portuguese in the home presented ‘a challenge’ for them when they started school. Dulce Alves elaborated on her experience at school:



We had two tests, one on the silkworms and one was Jan van Riebeeck. Ten questions on Jan van Riebeeck and I went home and studied it like parrot-work. I went to school and we wrote the test. I wrote the answers as it appeared in the book [from which she had studied], because I don’t know the questions and can’t understand a word. I got nine out of ten. The next day we got silkworms to study. Studied it like parrot-work: question 1 is that answer, question 2 is that... I got one out of ten. The teacher called me to the front and mumbled to me and still to this day I don’t know what she told me. The teacher had swopped the questions around and the other day she left it as it was in the book. I could not read the questions, because I did not understand it.⁷⁵

Indian children experienced similar adjustments and embarrassments, even being placed with children four years younger than them in a class. They could only speak Konkani, Gujarati or Urdu on arrival and they had to adapt to a surrounding where English and Afrikaans were

⁷³ Interview with Lidia Afonso, 14 August 2017.

⁷⁴ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Speaking about Building Rylands (1960s to 1980s): A Cape Flats History’, *Social Dynamics: A journal of African studies*, 40:2, 362.

⁷⁵ Interview with Dulce Alves, 25 April 2018.

spoken.⁷⁶ Children were resilient, and interviewees mentioned that by associating with English class friends, they felt comfortable with the English language within six to twelve months. This is confirmed by the odd immigration file. In the case of José da Luz, a std. 6 pupil at Christian Brothers' Secondary School in Woodstock during the 1960s, the principal wrote that he 'has made very satisfactory progress'.⁷⁷

For the pioneer Madeirans, like the Indians, education was important. Madeirans wanted their children to make a better life for themselves through education, 'the key for the future'.

Today second/third generation Madeirans are found in all sectors of professional life, an indication of their improved social status within Cape Town society. The parents in Indian families encouraged their children to further their education. In a documented case, an Indian widow, who worked in a fruit and vegetable shop, ensured that five of her children became professionals: one lawyer, two doctors, a librarian and a higher education academic.⁷⁸

Furthermore, the importance of education within the Indian community is also illustrated by the South African Kshatriya Mahasabha education trust granting hundreds of bursaries that enabled the younger generation from the Gujarati shoemaker caste to obtain a tertiary education.⁷⁹ However, out of necessity, young children at times went to work instead of attending school. An interviewee recalled that his father came from Madeira at the age of twelve during the 1960s and went to work full-time in the family shop.⁸⁰ There are cases that minors from India also tended not to go to school but went into the family businesses.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'India-South Africa Mobilities', 171.

⁷⁷ WCA: PIO 2241, 97112e. File of José da Luz. The authorities were not reluctant to grant Temporary Permits for educational purposes, provided that the student was studying full-time, attended classes regularly and made satisfactory progress. In this regard, six-monthly progress reports had to be submitted to the immigration officials by the school. See WCA: PIO2241, 97129e. File of Jacinto Gomes Marques.

⁷⁸ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Split-Households', 652.

⁷⁹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Gujarati Shoemakers', 180.

⁸⁰ Interview with Anonymous (b), 26 April 2018.

⁸¹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'India-South Africa Mobilities', 173.

Religion was an important part of the pioneer Madeirans' lives and the mother ensured that the children attended Holy Mass on a Sunday, went regularly to Confession and attended catechism classes (if not at a Catholic school). Praying the rosary or other prayers as a family in the evenings was a familiar practice, as 'the Portuguese had that thing of praying together as family and that was very strong in our custom.'⁸² In the absence of the mother, the grandmother ensured that the religious practices were not neglected.

Although the mother played the dominant role in the passing of the culture and traditions to the next generation, the role of Portuguese organisations in Cape Town in this regard cannot be ignored. Furthermore, attempts to preserve the language in the younger generation as a means of maintaining a sense of national identity was also regarded as important. These two aspects will be considered in a later section of this chapter.

Keeping in Contact with the Island Homeland

The Madeirans in Cape Town never forgot their family in Madeira. Keeping in contact with family and friends in Madeira was regarded as an important practice. This was done largely through letter writing, because international telephone calls were expensive and more importantly, few Madeirans had access to telephones. Madeirans who were illiterate managed to get friends and family members to write letters for them. This was regarded as a favour and no money was ever requested for this assistance. Being far from family members and feeling isolated in a foreign environment, these epistolary practices gave the pioneer Madeirans a sense of well-being. Janet Maybin argues that letter writing 'can fulfil communicative,

⁸² Interview with Alberto Gonçalves, 26 July 2017.

emotional, and functional purposes normally covered by spoken language and direct interaction'.⁸³

Although letter writing was the accepted means of maintaining contact, the practice of sending and receiving gifts as a way of keeping in contact was an important part of Madeiran custom. The writer can remember that his grandmother received cakes ('bolo de mel') from Madeira through the post. The cakes, with ritualistic precision, were cut into slices, thereby ensuring that each family member received a slice of 'the cake from Madeira'. Sending of second-hand clothing to Madeira was a customary practice.⁸⁴ Also, visits to Madeira by boat were accompanied by taking rolls of material to family and friends to make outfits for special occasions such as Christmas and important *festas*.⁸⁵

Indians in Cape Town had a close connection to the villages where their parents and grandparents originated. Those who became financially successful, sent money to build schools or clinics to provide educational opportunities and medical care in their ancestral villages. In a documented case, Abdulla Gangraker constructed a school and a clinic in Morba, the birth- place of his father. He explains further:

When I come to Morba I want... to try to do whatever I can do for the people of the village... so that they can remember there was a person like my father that was born here who left this village for South Africa for the purpose of better living for these people in this village.⁸⁶

There is no record that financially successful Madeirans in Cape Town sent money to their ancestral villages for community projects.

⁸³ J. Maybin, 'Death Row Penfriends: Some Effects of Letter Writing on Identity and Relationships', in D. Barton and N. Hall (eds.), *Letter Writing as a Social Practice* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000), 165.

⁸⁴ Interviews with Estela Ferreira & Maria Jardim, 7 September and 27 September 2017 respectively

⁸⁵ Interview with Maggie de Sousa, 7 February 2018.

⁸⁶ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Re-Locating Memories: Transnational and Local Narratives of Indian South Africans in Cape Town', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 52(8), 2017, 1066.

Portuguese Organisations in Cape Town

There are several organisations in Cape Town which aim to maintain Madeiran traditions, values and culture and to strengthen their national identity. At the same time, the intention is also to assist the needier members of the community. The main organisations in Cape Town which project these ideals will be considered.

As far as can be determined, the earliest Madeiran cultural organisation in Cape Town was the Portuguese Folk Dancing Group, established in 1958 by Antonio Martins.⁸⁷ The reason for the late establishment of cultural organisations in Cape Town, was that the Madeirans were working long hours in their businesses to improve themselves and cared about little else. The dancing group practices weekly at the Portuguese Cultural and Welfare Centre (see below) and presently has thirty-five dancers and five musicians. This group dances at the Dias Festival in Mossel Bay and at several of the local *festas*.⁸⁸ The dance group exposes the wider public to Portuguese cultural activities and practices.

The Portuguese Association of the Cape of Good Hope (‘Associação Portuguesa do Cabo da Boa Esperança’) was established in 1965 on ground donated by the City Council in Rugby. The aim of the Association is to ‘keep culture, religion and sport alive within the Portuguese community... and to bring and keep the community together’.⁸⁹ Prior to the establishment of the Association, there was no place for the Madeiran community to meet. It was mainly ‘visiting each other’s families... to chat to one another... normally the men go into one corner and the women in another... and the children mix and play’.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Interview with Vera da Silva, 21 August 2017.

⁸⁸ *Ibid* and ‘The Portuguese Folk Dancing Group’ in *Amigos Portugueses*, 59. Local *festas*: ‘Festa Nossa Senhora Do Amparo’ in Stellenbosch and ‘Festa Dos Santos Populares’ in Woodstock.

⁸⁹ Interview with Maggie de Sousa on 7 February 2018.

⁹⁰ Interview with Ligia Fernandes on 27 January 2018.

The Association has various activities to forge a ‘togetherness’ amongst Cape Town Madeirans. Lunches are arranged every Sunday and Wednesday, where some typically Portuguese dishes are served. Once a month the Association hosts a lunch for the Academia do Bacalhau (‘Codfish Academy’). This is an international organisation of mostly businessmen and ‘is a flagship of Portuguese heritage, culture and traditions... offering friendship, immediate help and assistance amongst Portuguese speaking communities around the world’.⁹¹ The Association also hosts the Portuguese National Day (10 June) for the Portuguese ambassador and other diplomatic dignitaries. Apart from the social activities, the Association also serves as a venue for certain religious celebrations. On Christmas Eve, for example, Holy Mass is celebrated, and it attracts Madeirans from all over the peninsula.⁹²

The ‘Amigos da Madeira’ was formed in 1967 by a group of friends. They meet weekly at the Vasco da Gama football club to socialise by enjoying a meal together and ‘to play cards, dominoes or matches’.⁹³ They also host the annual ‘Dia da Madeira’ dinner on the 3rd June. Any funds which they raise is given to the Portuguese Cultural and Welfare Centre.

The Portuguese Cultural and Welfare Centre was registered in 1998 to assist the needy in the community and to preserve the Portuguese culture in Cape Town. To finance its activities, various fund-raising activities are held, which include Mothers/Father’s Day lunches, cultural exhibitions (embroidery), catering functions (birthdays, baptisms, weddings) and various dinners (e.g. fisherman’s ball). With the funds raised, assistance is given to the needy in several ways, which include the payment of funeral, medical and transport expenses, food parcels, senior citizens outings and a bursary scheme.⁹⁴

⁹¹ ‘Academia do Bacalhau de Cape Town’ in *Amigos Portugueses*, 2016, 31.

⁹² Interview with Maggie de Sousa on 7 February 2018.

⁹³ ‘History of Amigos da Madeira’ in *Amigos Portugueses*, 2016, 61.

⁹⁴ ‘Portuguese Cultural and Welfare Centre’ in *Amigos Portugueses*, 2016, 39-41.

The main cultural event and fund-raiser which the Centre organises is the ‘Blessing of the Fishing Fleet Festival’, an event which was first held in Cape Town in 1989. This Portuguese tradition of ‘Blessing of the Fishing Fleet’ is a global tradition of the fishing communities to pray for a safe and abundant season. In Cape Town it is held annually at the beginning of October at the V&A Waterfront dockside. The ceremony begins with a procession and carrying the statues of Our Lady of Fátima⁹⁵ and St Peter the Fisherman. This is followed by Holy Mass on the pier and the procession and blessing of fishing boats at sea. The religious ceremonies are followed by entertainment and the selling of typical Portuguese food.⁹⁶ Exposing Cape Town to the ‘Blessing of the Fishing Fleet’ is a public demonstration of Portuguese identity.

From the activities of this event, as in most Madeiran celebrations, there is an inseparable interlinking of the religious and the social. This aspect prompted a third generation Madeiran in his mid-twenties to remark that ‘even though the younger generation don’t go to church, [by attending these celebrations] they still get that little bit of holiness in them’.⁹⁷

The Women’s League (‘Liga da Mulher’), established in 1993, is a group of women who meet every month/six weeks to socialise and to have a topic for discussion. Guest speakers are also invited and on occasions cooking classes are presented for the younger generation wanting to learn the Portuguese way of cooking. The aim of this organisation is ‘to make the Portuguese culture more alive... and promoting the togetherness of the Portuguese women’.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ It is reputed that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, appeared to three peasant children (Lúcia Santos, Francisco and Jacinta Marto) at the Cova da Iria in Fátima, Portugal from the 13th May to the 13th October 1917. It is a popular place of pilgrimage, drawing thousands of pilgrims each year.

⁹⁶ The typical food sold are: tuna and steak rolls, espetada, malassadas, bolo de mel, bolo do caco, pasteis de nata and so forth.

⁹⁷ Interview with João Jardim, 21 August 2017.

⁹⁸ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018.

The 'Amigos Portugueses' was formed over ten years ago by a group of motorcycle and music enthusiasts. Their goal is to celebrate comradeship among their ethnic group. They are active at most cultural events of the Portuguese community. There is also a welfare dimension to their activities.⁹⁹

Indians in Cape Town also have their organisations to maintain and foster their cultural and religious traditions. The United Hindu Association was founded in 1903 and later named the Cultural Hindu Society, with the purpose of catering for the needs of the Hindu community, such as securing a crematorium.¹⁰⁰ The Rylands Hindu Women's Association was established in 1966, which promoted Indian culture and assisted the community in several ways, such as conducting prayer services and assisting families during times of death. The Rylands Cultural Association was founded in 1971 and did much to foster Indian music. In 1979 the Vadhini Indian Dance Academy was started in Rylands. The Rylands Homecraft was started in 1983 to develop the skills of women in cooking, sewing, knitting and flower-arrangement. It was open to all, irrespective of religion or caste.¹⁰¹ While some of these organisations brought people of the same religion together, the cultural organisations brought about harmony between Muslim and Hindu, by their common love of Indian music and dance.

These Madeiran and Indian community-based organisations are playing a significant role in maintaining a community identity by its welfare, social and religious initiatives. It could be argued that they have assisted in creating a sense of pride and cohesion within their communities and are presenting an important means of cultural expression.

⁹⁹ 'Introduction' in *Amigos Portugueses*, 2016, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Gujarati Shoemakers', 180-181.

¹⁰¹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Speaking About Building Rylands', 362, 365.

Maintenance of Cultural/Religious Traditions: Second/Third Generations

Eric Morier-Genoud and Michel Cahen, using Robin Cohen's eight characteristics of the ideal type of diaspora,¹⁰² argue that it is not possible to speak about a diaspora as soon as migrants arrive in a country. Diasporas only form with time: when the pioneer migrants pass away, the children and grandchildren must maintain the culture and values of the migrant community to be able to speak of a diaspora.¹⁰³ It is possible that a diaspora, once formed, can eventually disappear.

Glaser argues that it is in the second and third generations that clearer patterns of identity formation become discernible. As the generations move further away from the pioneer generation, it becomes harder to maintain the culture. It is among them that 'the language of 'origin' recedes, experiences diversify, loyalties compete to promote, and perhaps re-ignite and re-imagine, immigrant identities'.¹⁰⁴ To what extent has the Madeiran culture being maintained in the second and third generations in Cape Town?

The pioneer Madeirans desired that their children kept close to the Portuguese culture and traditions and marrying within the community was regarded as important. From the twenty-one (two unmarried) second generation Madeirans interviewed, seventeen (89.4%) were married or had been married to partners from a Madeiran background and nineteen could speak Portuguese (90.4%). Although this is a small sample, it is suggestive that marriage within one's ethnic community was largely retained. Also, the retention of the language within families was largely successful.

¹⁰² Eric Morier-Genoud and Michel Cahen, 'Introduction: Portugal, Empire and Migrations – Was There Ever an Autonomous Social Imperial Space?' in Morier-Genoud and Cahen (eds), *Imperial Migrations: Colonial Communities and Diaspora in the Portuguese World* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 10.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Glaser, 'Portuguese Immigrant History in Twentieth Century South Africa', 76.

Although the children of the pioneer Madeirans attended English-speaking schools and associated with non-Portuguese friends, they still heard and spoke Portuguese in the home (as already mentioned, most pioneer Madeirans could only speak Portuguese). An interviewee related that ‘my parents had a rule; as soon as you enter the front door of the house, your English is left outside, and you speak only Portuguese’.¹⁰⁵ This is not unlike the experience of second- generation Madeirans on the island of Jersey. They relate that ‘when they crossed the threshold of their houses their parents expected them to act out ‘being Portuguese’ by using the language and not behaving as they would at their ‘English friends’ houses’.¹⁰⁶ In both these instances, the pioneer Madeirans were reinforcing in their children a sense of being Portuguese, which meant the retention of the cultural values of this community. All the interviewees mentioned that they were ‘practicing Catholics’. Although this is a small sample, I would cautiously suggest that the religious tradition of the second generation has largely been retained.

The picture changes significantly in the third generation. Second generation parents live in an English-speaking environment and most do not retain the Portuguese language in the home, because they want their children to integrate fully into the South African culture and not be ‘left behind’ at school by not being able to speak English properly. Furthermore, many second- generation Madeirans feel insecure in speaking Portuguese to their children, because they consider themselves inadequate in speaking the language correctly.¹⁰⁷ A South African born Madeiran in his early thirties recorded the difficulty of retaining the language in the family:

To keep the language is one of the hardest things. When you look at the American [Portuguese] communities which are more advanced – I think they are on 4th or 5th stages [generations]. They are also pretty much lost as well because you get so

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Ligia Fernandes, 27 January 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Mar-Molinero, ‘Family and Transmission’, 102.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Filomena Gonçalves, 8 March 2018.

entrenched in where you at. I'm seeing with my kids; my kids are three and two and it's so hard because my wife and I although both Portuguese, we speak English it's like our natural kind of tongue, so we will speak English to each other. The kids know we speak English and they will speak English to us although I try and impart as much as I can with them. It's super tough so obviously they try once again to pick up from grandparents. But now they are going to crèche, so it's really difficult. The school where you go to and the TV you are seeing are 90% English – so it's really tough, it's not easy to keep the language.¹⁰⁸

Despite the difficulty in retaining the language in the third and later generations, there are attempts to preserve the language. The Portuguese Association serves as a venue for those wishing to learn to speak and write Portuguese. Private classes are also presented in individual homes. Schools with many students from a Portuguese background, have Portuguese lessons available after school hours. Teachers not teaching in their private capacity are paid by the Portuguese government.¹⁰⁹

In sharp contrast to the deep religious devotion of the pioneer (especially women) Madeirans, for the third generation, to a significant extent, religious practices have declined in importance. Solange Seixal made the following observation:

No, it's not as important [for the third generation] to practice. It is usually the grandmother who would try to force everyone to go to church, the mother would be more relaxed and would try to appease the grandmother and the third generation will be like I don't want to go, don't force me to go. I'll go on the big holidays like Christmas or Easter.¹¹⁰

An interviewee on the island of Jersey remarked that 'Portuguese people are Catholic, like, all of us in one way or another, it's just part of being Portuguese; doesn't mean you practice, just your family are, so you are'.¹¹¹ Although not practicing, she still acknowledges her Catholicism, a marker in her Portuguese identity, inherited from her parents. I would suggest

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Victor Henriques, 21 August 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Filomena Gonçalves, 8 March 2018. Schools with many learners from a Madeiran background are Milnerton High, Holy Cross convent, Brooklyn, St John's (CBC), Parklands, Reddam House, Sea Point and Panorama Primary.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Solange Seixal, 6 May 2018.

¹¹¹ Mar-Molinero, 'Family and Transmission', 103.

that this is not unlike the attitude held by many third generation Madeirans in Cape Town, although further research is required.

The expectancy of marrying a partner from a Madeiran background has declined in importance. An interviewee stated that ‘now-a-days nobody worries [who you marry]. To me it does not make a difference, because it’s not to say that you are Portuguese you are better than anybody else. Not all the Portuguese marriages works out’.¹¹² By marrying a non-Portuguese South African, ‘automatically you almost become assimilated. You are sort of diluting your culture’.¹¹³ Maggie de Sousa expressed a similar comment:

In my family, my nephews and nieces are very Portuguese and they get involved in the community and I think it also depends on the families. You know, we are all married to Portuguese spouses and that makes a difference. If you are married to, for example to English or South African girls, they also have their traditions; you tend to lose your culture.¹¹⁴

This leads to the weakening of the ethnic communal identity. Alberto Gonçalves observed that when he was growing up in Cape Town, Portuguese music was played in the home, but the children of today never hear the music in the home. As a result, when they join the Portuguese folk dancing group, they struggle to learn the dance steps, because they are not familiar with the beat.¹¹⁵

Despite the inter-marriages taking place and the diluting of cultural practices, there is a strong pride amongst the third generation regarding their Madeiran ancestry. This is illustrated by the comments of a third generation Madeiran in her early twenties:

I’m very proud where I come from and what our families have achieved and especially moving to an unfamiliar place and all the struggles that comes with it... [and] everything they have built here. You know even going to the Portuguese Club and see how families move on the dance-floor. My mom would tell me that that was my granddad’s best friend growing up and for me that brings me a little closer to my grandfather... just having that sense of pride you know, wanting to

¹¹² Interview with Filomena Francisco, 31 July 2017.

¹¹³ Interview with Celia Afonso, 6 August 2017.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Maggie de Sousa, 7 February 2018.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Alberto Gonçalves, 26 July 2017.

know where you come from and what it was all about and understanding the struggles that came with everything they have accomplished so far.¹¹⁶

From this extract, the re-telling of family stories also serves to remind the younger generation of their family roots. Also, several interviewees noted that there appears to be a resurgence in an interest amongst younger Madeirans in their heritage.¹¹⁷

Despite the pride in their ancestral background, a young second generation Madeiran was critical of the attitude of the third generation. She explained that:

[T]hey don't take an interest in trying to learn the culture, learning the language, learning the food and like to attach themselves to the name... being Portuguese is not just a label it's actually a way of life, it's something so inherent to your identity; so when you call yourself Portuguese you're actually attaching yourself to an identity... a way of thinking, a way of living.¹¹⁸

Indians were also proud of the achievements of their family members after arriving in Cape Town. The Jaga brothers related that their grandfather went from door to door to collect shoes for repairing. They made the point that their grandfather and others leaving India '...had guts. They had to come down to this not knowing the language or anything like that and trying to see if they can better their life... not a dime in their pocket'.¹¹⁹ Their father continued in the shoe-repair business and he 'was a hard worker, putting in hours from early morning through to the late hours of the night. He invested in modern machinery and had several staff working for him'.¹²⁰ These family reflections were passed down to the younger generation, instilling in them a pride in their Indian heritage.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Nadia da Silva, 21 August 2017.

¹¹⁷ Victor Henriques, interviewed 21 August 2017, mentioned that there has been an increase in the number of the youth joining the Portuguese Folk Dancing Group. Nadia da Silva, interviewed 21 August 2017, noted that the youth-orientated choosing of the 'King and Queen of the Sea' (which presages the 'Blessing of the Fishing Fleet Festival') was fully booked in 2017. Both Alberto Gonçalves, interviewed 26 July 2017 and José Ferreira, discussion on 8 September 2018, referred to the renewed interest among the youth.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Solange Seixal, 6 May 2018.

¹¹⁹ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Re-Locating Memories', 1072.

¹²⁰ Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 'Gujarati Shoemakers', 172.

It is evident that by emigrating from Madeira, the Madeirans did experience a better life and were appreciative of what South Africa had offered them. This becomes clear when Paula Lang related that her mother loved South Africa and her greatest fear was that when she went on holiday to Madeira, she would die there. Her wish was granted, and she died and was buried in South Africa. Furthermore, she recalled an incident which is indicative of the second generations appreciative feeling and loyalty towards South Africa:

[w]e were on a boat cruise and there were these South Africans telling some British people how terrible it is here in South Africa. I eventually got up and said that you are actually talking nonsense you know and I corrected them right then and there and I said why don't you make a difference in our country. So they looked at me and said what must we do so I said they should get involved in the local community, get involved in Neighbourhood Watch, your Business Forum organisations and make a difference in your community... don't stand and criticise and tell things that are not true to visitors and we want foreigners to come to our country so how can you paint them a bad picture? So I'm very South African, but yet I'm also very proudly Portuguese.¹²¹

Conclusion

This chapter has emphasised the differences between the lives of the wives of fishermen compared to those of shop owners. Both in their own way, contributed to the household. This is not unlike Indian women, who, out of necessity, learnt new skills and contributed towards the family economy. The labour of women assisted the upward mobility of Madeirans and Indians within Cape Town society.

This chapter also includes the experiences of children from Madeira growing up in Cape Town in the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. In a comparison with Indian children, certain similarities are evident. These include the learning of a new language and the challenges and embarrassment which this presented when starting school. Male children were taught to work in the family business from an early age.

¹²¹ Interview with Paula Lang, 10 September 2017.

Despite their racial classification, the Madeirans were not accepted on a socio-economic level by some white South African. This had mostly to do with the perception that they would not be able to integrate successfully into white society.

The Madeiran women were the cultural transmitters in the family and ensured that the language and religious values were passed on to their children. However, over time organisations have taken over from the family, especially as second and third generation families struggle to maintain the culture. Indian women and organisations also played and continue to play a role in maintaining cultural and religious traditions.

Marriage between South Africans from a Madeiran ancestry and those from other backgrounds and the gradual loss of the language, has diluted the Madeiran culture in Cape Town. Glaser observes that the Madeiran community began to look like other white communities by the 1980s and 1990s.¹²²

Although there are marked similarities between the Madeiran and Indian experiences in Cape Town, a distinct difference was that Indians were affected by apartheid legislation from 1950 onwards, which caused hardship, but also had unexpected positive aspects.

The second-generation Madeirans have largely retained their cultural and religious values, but the third and later generations have, to a significant extent, a weak connection to these values. This raises the question whether the Madeiran culture and traditions still be discernible in Cape Town within the next fifteen to twenty years. This is difficult to predict, but in the concluding chapter a few comments will be made.

¹²² Glaser, 'Home, Farm and Shop', 897.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this thesis has been to focus on the immigration of Madeirans and their settlement in Cape Town from the 1900s to the 1970s. This was explored in three chapters: *Exclusions, Immigration Documentation and Illegal Entry, Marriages and the Split-Household* and *Making Lives in Cape Town*. It focuses on how exclusionary legislation from 1902 affected Madeiran entry, how they managed to circumvent it and the documents required for immigration. Particular attention is drawn to the role of women in the migration process, the nature of the household and the impact of women in shaping a settled Madeiran community. The thesis examines the role Portuguese organisations played and continue to play in maintaining cultural and religious values and the extent to which these values have been retained in the second and later generations. Both chapters *Marriages and the Split-Household* and *Making Lives in Cape Town* have highlighted the neglected aspect of the memories of children and women in the study of immigration. This thesis has, therefore, illustrated that the insights of women's and children's voices are important in historical narratives.

In *Exclusions, Immigration Documentation and Illegal Entry* it was argued that the Madeirans were regarded as 'undesirable'. The Immigration Act of 1902 (and subsequent legislation) included a literacy test in a European language. This test was initially aimed at preventing Indians from entering Cape Town but impacted on other groups as well. This 'document of entry' would have proved difficult for the largely illiterate Madeirans to obtain. While the literacy test was a means of exclusion, we find that Madeirans, like other Europeans, with an employment contract, were exempt from the language requirement. The fishing skills of the Madeirans enabled them to obtain employment contracts with the large fishing companies.

The literacy test, or so-called ‘Natal Formula’, was first implemented in Natal in 1897 and was an imperial first. It became legislation in the Cape in 1902 to prohibit ‘undesirables’ from entering the Cape ports. Those who were clearly European had little difficulty from entering. It appeared that Madeirans were targeted for exclusion, as they were perceived as borderline Europeans. Initially the test consisted of one or two sentences written at the back of the passenger form. The passenger was able to decide what to write, but later it was a dictated test and lengthier than previously. A study of a few examples of the literacy test as applied to Madeirans showed that some passed the test, but it was exceedingly stressful for them. Further, the Portuguese consulate officials rather than the immigration officials assessed their competency. In the earlier period, Cousins, as Chief Immigration Officer, was certainly prejudiced on how he administered the test. This ‘document of entry’ effectively excluded those who were perceived as ‘undesirable’, including Europeans, although mostly Indians.

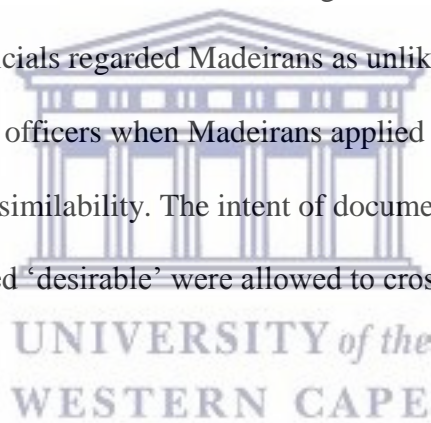
This chapter also pointed to permits and certificates of identity. For the Madeirans legally in the Cape, these were important documents, which ensured their re-entry within a prescribed period without undergoing the literacy test. Temporary permits, for those prohibited entry, were also granted to finalise certain administrative issues. Madeirans made use of the temporary permit, which could be renewed on a continuous basis, to undertake their fishing activities in the Cape and South-West Africa. While documents subjected Madeirans to bureaucratic observance, they were important in the rights they conferred.

Those Madeirans who were illiterate and without an employment contract resorted to illegal immigration. Their strategy was to stowaway and to ‘jump ship’ at the Cape ports. As the controls at the ports began to tighten, it became increasingly difficult to illegally enter the ports after 1917. Illegal entry then shifted to overland entry through Mozambique, by using fraudulent documents or bypassing the border post at Komatipoort altogether.

The fishing skills of the Madeirans gave them certain advantages. They were sought- after by the large fishing companies, who protected their interests once employed by them. From the immigration files, this became apparent in several ways. The fishing companies influenced the immigration officials in granting their Madeiran employees permanent residence and preventing their expulsion from the country because of illegal residency. They also took on the responsibility of annually renewing the temporary permits of their Madeiran employees.

From 1913, the immigration policies were focused on European immigration. With the passing of legislation during the 1930s, Madeirans became subject to quotas, and they had to apply for permanent residence and naturalisation like any other foreign nationals. Quota immigrants were chosen on their likelihood of becoming assimilated with the white citizens of the Union. Government officials regarded Madeirans as unlikely to fulfil this criterion.

Comments of the immigration officers when Madeirans applied for permanent residence were based largely on colour and assimilability. The intent of documents was to control entry into the country. Only those deemed 'desirable' were allowed to cross its borders and to take up residency.

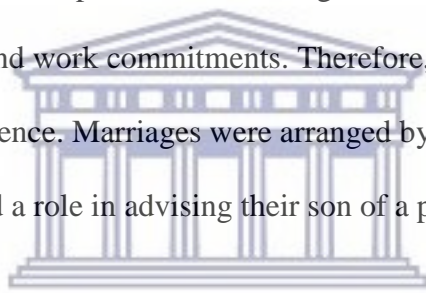


From 1948, the Nationalist government followed policies which ensured the entry of immigrants who would assimilate easily into white, Afrikaner society. Madeirans were regarded with suspicion and their suitability as immigrants was questioned. The 1960s allowed for a more open immigration policy and the Madeirans were welcomed into the country. This policy was short-lived and by the end of the 1960s applications from Madeira, based largely on religious grounds, were severely curtailed.

In *Marriages and the Split-Household*, it was pointed out that marriage for young women was a means to leave the poverty of their homeland. Madeiran husbands left the island and established themselves in Cape Town before sending for their wives. For Madeirans, it was

mostly the intention to leave their homeland permanently and to start a new life elsewhere. In the absence of husbands, the patriarchal family was turned into a matriarchal family, with the wife undertaking the responsibilities of the husband. By becoming the head of the household, the wife made the emigration of the husband possible. The split-household form did have consequences for families. Extra-marital affairs in Cape Town occurred, with some Madeirans abandoning their wives and starting a new family in Cape Town. In most cases, however, the husband sent for his family once firmly established.

For young Madeiran males in Cape Town, it was generally regarded as more ideal for a man to return to Madeira to find a bride, because initially there was only a small pool of eligible single Madeiran women living in Cape Town. Returning to Madeira was not always possible because of the cost involved and work commitments. Therefore, marriage by proxy became a feature of the Madeiran experience. Marriages were arranged by the exchange of photographs and letters. Parents also played a role in advising their son of a prospective bride, who was hard-working and respectable.



Making Lives in Cape Town portrays the settled Madeiran community in Cape Town. The pioneer Madeirans who were involved in fishing, settled mostly in Woodstock, because it gave them easy access to the harbour. The concentration of Madeirans in a specific area drew other Madeirans to the area, creating a sense of community and security. They were a homogenous group, bound together by a common language and religion. The pioneer Madeirans kept mostly to themselves, relying on family and other Portuguese for support and assistance.

The wives of fishermen stayed mostly at home to care for the children and took over the household responsibilities while the husband was away fishing for six months of the year. The wives of shop owners worked mostly in the businesses. Wives worked long hours in the

shop, without receiving much recognition for this. There were exceptions, whereby the husband and wife formed a strong partnership, with each contributing an equal share to the growth of the business. Initially, Madeirans had difficulty in serving customers, because of the language barrier. To survive in an unfamiliar environment, they learnt quickly.

It is evident that the pioneer Madeiran women were the cultural transmitters in the settled family. They ensured that the cultural and religious values were maintained. The success of their efforts can be determined from the limited sample undertaken in this study. It is suggestive that the culture and religious values have largely been retained in the second-generation. Conversely, the third-generation has largely lost the language and the religious traditions have declined in importance. Marriages between them and non-Portuguese South Africans are common. This has led to a weakening of the Portuguese communal identity.

Portuguese organisations in Cape Town are attempting to maintain the culture, but the younger generation seem largely reluctant participate in activities and to learn about their traditions. Language classes are also held at various venues, but the number of third generation Madeirans attending these classes are small, compared to the large numbers living in Cape Town.

While this study has focused on Madeirans, in a small effort to desegregate immigration histories, it has sought to ask the question to what extent was the Madeiran experience unique and distinctive or are there commonalities with other groups. In this regard it has sought a comparative focus with Indians in Cape Town, but has also drawn on some comparisons with immigration of other groups such as Greeks on the island of Kythera emigrating to Australia and Poles emigrating to the United Kingdom.

Indians, like Madeirans, left the poverty of their villages to seek a better life in Cape Town. In contrast to Madeirans, the pattern followed by Indian males was 'circular migration'. The

goal was to remit money to India and thereby improve the situation of the family at home. This temporary migration would end once they were ready to retire and after securing the rights of sons to live in Cape Town. Furthermore, both Indian and Madeiran entry into Cape Town was characterised by chain migration. Usually a family member, already established, would encourage migration and have employment and accommodation available. Likewise, Greeks already established in Australia extended an invitation to family members to join them.

In comparing Madeirans with Indians, it should firstly be stated that Madeirans, while not being regarded as a 'desirable' immigrant group like Indians, nevertheless benefitted from immigration policies, because they were still nominally regarded as European. Hence, they could enter with contracts and if they were considered suitable to assimilate into the white population. Indians by contrast, were regarded as a totally prohibited group and from 1913 no new Indians except wives and children of those Indians legally in the Union could enter.

Similar to Madeirans, Indians faced the same kind of documentation such as permits/certificates identity. The acquisition of these documents ensured re-entry into the Cape without undergoing the literacy test. For Indians, applications for permits/certificates were routinely denied. This placed Indians in an unenviable position. They could either remain in the Cape or return to India without any possibility of re-entry. No noteworthy evidence suggests that applications from Madeirans were denied. For Indians, a photograph on the permit was compulsory and after 1911 they were fingerprinted, whether literate or not. For Madeirans, thumbprints were only necessary in the case of illiteracy, although a certificate of domicile included thumbprints, despite the holder having signed the certificate. Photographs and physical descriptions were not mandatory on the permits/certificates of identity. It was pointed out that in the case of Madeirans, there were inconsistencies in the completion of permits/certificates.

Common to both Indians and Madeirans was the extent of illegal immigration to Cape Town and the degree of ethnic co-operation that existed regarding overland illegal immigration from Lourenço Marques. Yet, what studies of Indian fraudulent entry suggest, is that Indian interpreters developed an undue influence in the Cape Town Immigration Department, where extensive corruption of officials occurred. This allowed the falsification of documents of entry and the granting of permits to Indians not entitled to receive these. The inquiry into corruption and fraud in the Immigration Department was primarily focused on Indians, with no Madeirans implicated.

The split-household was the dominant household form for Indians, Poles and Greeks. Like Madeirans, Greeks waited for their husbands to send for them once established in Australia. In the absence of husbands, the Greek wife took on new, additional responsibilities, usually reserved for the husband, such as managing the household. Contrary to the other groups, many Indian wives preferred not to leave their villages and when they were legally forced to do so to accompany minors, they did so temporarily and returned once the minor was settled in Cape Town. In the absence of husbands, Indian wives lived with in-laws and were mostly subservient to their wishes.

As with Madeirans, young Greek women from the island of Kythera were also subjected to arranged marriages, where the husband was selected by a family member in Australia. From Kythera they took the 'bride ship' to Australia, and married Kytherian men much older than themselves.

Indians followed a different marriage path, whereby girls as young as eight were pledged to marry. Polygamy, practiced within the Hindu and Muslim communities, hampered the entry of wives into South Africa. Legislation immediately after Union stipulated that only one wife was permitted entry. A long documentary process was followed to ensure that this was

enforced. Furthermore, if an Indian had children with another woman in South Africa, the wife in India would be denied entry, which would have consequences for the wife in India. In 1956, the Nationalist government prohibited the entry of Indian wives. Madeiran wives never faced such prohibition. Their entry was assured by the presentation of a marriage certificate and a permit of entry, provided that their husbands were legally in the country.

In Cape Town, Indian women played a key role in the business, working long hours and having to overcome the language barrier. Out of necessity, the Gujarati women undertook the repair of shoes, essentially a male prerogative. Like Madeiran women, they played a significant role in the upward mobility of Indians within Cape Town society. In addition to their role in the business, the women ensured that the Indian cultural and religious traditions were maintained in the home and were instrumental in the establishment of Indian cultural organisations in Cape Town.

Indians were not a homogenous group but were separated by language, religion and regions of origin. Initially, they were spread throughout Cape Town, devoid of a strong Indian identity. Unlike Madeirans, Indians were affected by apartheid legislation. In 1957, Rylands was declared an Indian area, which uprooted Indians who lived and had businesses in white and coloured areas. This caused anger and lingering bitterness, which was also directed at the Madeirans. Parts of Woodstock was declared a white area and the recently arrived Madeirans could remain, while Indians were forced to move.

The move to Rylands led to a growth and consolidation of Indianness, with a surge in religious and cultural activity. The first Hindu temple in Cape Town was built in Rylands and several cultural organisations were formed, focusing on Indian dance and music.

Furthermore, the wealthier Indians bought properties in the early years after the establishment of Rylands at a reasonable price and built semi-detached houses, which they leased out.

Rylands was to Indians as Woodstock was to Madeirans, with the difference that Woodstock had a well-developed infra-structure, with long established religious and educational sites.

This thesis has pointed to the similarities between Madeirans and other ethnic groups, especially Indians. Despite these similarities, there were marked differences between Indians and Madeirans relating primarily to entry into the Cape ports, marriage, the advantages of being classified white and the effects of apartheid.

The Madeiran distinctiveness within South African society has become blurred in the third and later generations. This raises the following question: will the Madeiran culture still be visible in Cape Town within the next fifteen to twenty years or will only certain foods and surnames be the remaining relics of the culture?

The Portuguese organisations in Cape Town are mostly administrated by second-generation Madeirans. The next fifteen to twenty years will be critical to their continued existence. It will depend whether the younger generation are willing to sacrifice their time and involve themselves in these organisations and eventually replace the second-generation. The third and later generations have an intense pride in their Portuguese heritage and this augurs well for the continuation of the culture in Cape Town. Traces of a resurgence in interest in their heritage were observed by some interviewees. The culture may well weaken, but the prediction is that it will still be alive and visible in Cape Town within the next twenty years.

Possible avenues of further research could include the history and forms of Madeiran and Indian dance in Cape Town, the extent of the existence of a distinctive Indian culture amongst the younger generation and a comparison of political activism between Portuguese, Jews and Indians during the apartheid years in South Africa.

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