



# THE PORTUGUESE MIGRATION TO, AND SETTLEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1510-2013

May 10, 2013

Thematic Seminar 2, PhD Program in MIGRATION STUDIES, University of Lisbon

**SharingSpace Project** is financed by the European Union Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (FP7-PEOPLE-2012-IRSES)

**Peter Kankonde**

# Overview



- Introduction
- The Discovery by Vasco Da Gama
- The Lost Stock
- The Madeirans: The second and longest wave involved impoverished citizens of the island of Madeira.

# Overview Cont.

- The third involved more skilled Mainlanders (Portugal) from about 1940–1980, most coming in the 1960s and 1970s.
- 
- The Mozambican and Angolan ex-colonial refugees in 1975
- 
- Final: The current individualised immigration or transit migration to Mozambique and Angola
- **Break**
- Portuguese Identity
- 
- Research Project

# Introduction: General Migration Theories

---

- Draw on general international migration theories
- The cyclical nature of Portuguese migration based on economic opportunities in Portugal and abroad

# The Relevance of the Research

- South Africans of Portuguese descent are the third biggest white South African ethnic group (After Afrikaners and English)
- Portuguese probably constitute ten to fifteen per cent of the white South African population (Glaser, 2010).
- Yet it is a remarkably under-researched population.

# Introduction Cont.

---

- The ‘apartheid historical narrative,’ and undeniable political urgency.
- The end of Apartheid has left scholars searching for ‘smaller’ and less sensational stories

# Speculations on the Size of Portuguese and Luso-decedents in South Africa

- Estimates of Portuguese numbers by the 1990s varied from 300 000 to 700 000.
- In 1980 an article in the *Sunday Times* estimated 'at least 400 000' (*Sunday Times*, 10 August 1980)
- Weighing up different pieces of evidence, Da Rosa and Trigo (1990) suggested a figure of half a million.
- In 1995 the Portuguese language weekly, *O Século*, claimed a nationwide readership of 200 000 while *TV Portuguesa* claimed 80 000 subscribers (McDuling, 1995).
- Glaser (2010) suggests that an estimate of 400000 to 500000 seem more realistic.

# Speculations of the size Cont.

- The estimates are vague partly because of substantial illegal entry from the 1930s to the 1980s, intermarriage and dilution of identity in the second and third generations.
- It is safe to say that they constituted more or less 10 per cent of the South African white population by the mid 1990s (Glaser, 2010).



# Official Statistics Vs Socio-Culturally Relevant aspects of Luso-Descendence in South Africa



# Published Research on Portuguese in South Africa

- In spite of the fact that they are still comfortably the third largest 'white' group in South Africa (after those of Afrikaner and British ancestry) and that they have left indelible layers on the culture and economy of the country, there is an astonishingly sparse recognition of their existence in South African historiography and social sciences generally.
- A chapter in a volume on Portuguese migration written by Da Rosa and Trigo in 1990 is probably the only substantial published piece on Portuguese South Africans. But even this draws almost exclusively on secondary sources and relies quite heavily on a much earlier overview written in Portuguese by Leal in 1977.
- Two publications survey Portuguese immigrant adaptation and public attitudes towards them (Groenewald and Smedley, 1990)
- One journal article by Pereira focuses on the religious life of Portuguese immigrant women in Durban (Pereira, 2001).

# Research on the community cont.

- In 2008 the Portuguese Women's League published a book of writing by South African Portuguese women. The collection is mostly made of autobiographical sketches, some poems, and fiction (Pereira (ed.), 2009)
- In 2009 Ferreira and Le Roux published a volume which, in a series of short vignettes, lists numerous personal, cultural and political overlaps in the history of Portugal and South Africa. It focuses largely on pre-twentieth century history but does provide some useful material on more modern history (Gupta, 2010).
- Pereira's MA dissertation provides more detail than her published article (Pereira, 2000).

# Research work cont.

- McDuling has written a linguistic study of Portuguese language usage in South Africa which includes some valuable sociological detail (McDuling, 1995).
- Two Honours dissertations, both local studies which make use of archival sources and life history interviews, stand out.
- Machado has made a fascinating microstudy of the Madeiran community of Woodstock, Cape Town, while Tozzo focuses on the Durban community but offers broader insights into Portuguese immigration into South Africa in general (Machado, 1992; Tozzo, 2005)
- Sally Peberdy (2009) 'Selecting Immigrants' and
- Glaser's three recent published articles

# The Turkish Blocking of Road to the India

At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century the Portuguese discovered the sea route to the Indies around the Cape. this enabled them to bypass the Turkish blockade of the overland Silk Road between China and Europe.



# The 'discoverers-Keepers' Rule

The marking the new discover at the Cape of Good Hope



# History: First Contact by B. Diaz

## Explorers and settlers

The first contact between Portuguese sailors and Khoekhoen was by **Bartholomew Diaz** in 1488 at Mossel Bay.



# Conflict with the natives

- The Khoekhoen had sheep, cattle and access to fresh water, which the sailors needed. The Portuguese started landing at the Cape on their way to the East to trade with the Khoekhoen for water and meat.
- In 1510 trade between the Khoekhoen and the Portuguese ended abruptly. Sailors wanting to force the Khoe to trade with them kidnapped some of their children. The Khoekhoen fought back and killed Captain D'Almeida and a number of the sailors.



# The Assimilated Travelers

There are the very early Portuguese travellers who integrated into Afrikaner society from the 1700s until the mid 1800s.

The ancestors of these early patriarchs generally integrated into Afrikaner or 'coloured' societies.



# Colonel Ferreira: The Most prominent

Besides few Afrikaner surnames of Portuguese descent from this period, most notably 'Ferreira' and 'de Oliveira', they were totally assimilated and no traces of Portuguese identity survived

The most famous assimilated Portuguese is the Afrikaner Colonel Ignatius Ferreira after Ferreiratown in JHB CBD and Ferreiradorp, built in 1928 for the coloured community in Joburg.



# The Madeirans

- Madeira Island overall exported 316 000 people between 1940 and 1970 (Glaser, 2010).
- The United States, Canada, Brazil and Venezuela were the most important destinations, but a steady trickle chose South Africa.
- Many also went to Mozambique with South Africa as final destination (Machado, 2005).

# Madeirans cont.

- From the late 1800s small numbers of impoverished Madeirans with very little skills and literacy disembarked in Cape Town and tried to make a life for themselves in the Cape as market gardeners or fishermen, from the late 1800s until at least the 1970s;
- In 1904 there were officially under a thousand living in the Cape, mostly male.
- But the figure was almost certainly underestimated in the census because many entered illegally and kept a low profile (Da Rosa and Trigo, 'Islands', 183.)
- It is almost impossible to estimate how many spilt over the Mozambican border into the Transvaal or Natal.
- Local officials noticed a marked rise in Portuguese immigration after the republican government was toppled in Portugal in 1926.

# The Legal literacy Requirement

- The 1930s 'poor white problem'
- By the 1930s, the South African government was facing the 'poor white problem' and was even more reluctant to allow in yet more illiterate, unskilled white immigrants.
- 
- By 1937 the highly restrictive Aliens Immigration Act was passed, which allowed the government to be far more selective about whom it allowed in.
- 
- Nevertheless between 30 and 200 Madeirans managed to get through the entrance requirements every year and become legal residents during the 1920s and 1930s (Machado, 'Little Madeira', 8.).
- 
- Many others, almost impossible to quantify, entered illegally.

# Work and Integration: within the Community

- Madeirans, usually with very little skills and literacy,
- They found jobs mainly within their network
- The Cape Madeiran community gradually established itself during the 1910s and 1920s.
- Some of the better off immigrants owned or rented farms, shops and coffee houses by the 1920s. This made it easier for new Madeirans to enter because they could find employment in these enterprises and, with local sponsorship, stand a chance of gaining legal entry.
- They would work in the farms owned by other Madeirans. Some pooled resources to rent farms and get involved in market gardening. Most of these settled in the Transvaal, where there was a ready market for their produce

# 2nd World War and its Disruptions

- The war years, 1939 –1945, were fairly restrictive for potential legal immigrants.
- The strength of the local economy and the absence of military recruits created labour shortages. Nevertheless, shipping routes were disrupted and immigration officials, for security reasons, were cautious about foreigners entering the country.
- Between 1946 and 1948, however, the Smuts government actively recruited European immigrants. Aside from a desire to ‘improve’ the racial demographic balance, Smuts saw a skilled labour shortage as a serious impediment to growth.

# Post-War: most European countries encourage emigration

- Simultaneously, emigration was an attractive option for many in post-war Europe suffering from the scars of war, economic depression and shortages.
- Several European countries encouraged emigration, particularly to their colonies. To the dismay of Afrikaner nationalists, most of the immigrants who poured into South Africa in this period were British. But other Europeans, including some Portuguese, took advantage of the opportunity. Angola and Mozambique also received a spurt of Portuguese immigrants (though not regarded as immigrants by Portugal), and many of them eventually made their way to South Africa.
- This Smuts-era immigrant-friendly policy was short-lived. Once the Nationalists were in power, the policy was largely reversed. Only Dutch and German immigrants, who were deemed more likely to integrate into Afrikaner society, were welcomed.



# Choosing between Mass European Immigration or Lifting the Colour Bar

- In general, the South African government was hostile to Madeiran immigration. The increasingly powerful Afrikaner Nationalists were suspicious of Catholic and darker skinned southern Europeans who might 'dilute' the white population, not to mention the Afrikaner majority.
- Moreover, the Madeirans generally had very low levels of schooling. A large proportion was illiterate in Portuguese, let alone able to pass the educational test required by immigrants in the years 1920s

# 1970s Open-closed door immigration policy

- So, in spite of the perceived demographic vulnerability of whites and in spite of a growing skilled labour shortage, the Nationalist government imposed a highly restrictive European immigration regime between 1949 and 1960. It was only in the early 1960s, once the skilled labour shortage began to bite and the Nationalists felt more secure in power, that the policy was reconsidered. Faced with the alternatives of mass European immigration or lifting the skills colour bar, the apartheid regime opted for the former (Peberdy, 2009)
- Many hundreds of Madeirans managed anyway to enter South Africa legally from the 1940s to the 1960s.
- Only about 14 000 of the roughly 108 000 official Portuguese immigrants between 1940 and 1980 were from Madeira. It was in this context that illegal entry became a central part of the Madeiran immigrant experience in South Africa (Glaser, 2010).

## Illegal Entries: The Routes via LM (Maputo)

- ❑ Ships travelled from Portugal to Mozambique, usually stopping at Funchal, the capital of Madeira, and Cape Town along the way.
- ❑ Movement between Madeira and Mozambique, if the money for the passage could be raised, was straightforward and required no visa.
- ❑ The Portuguese government at the time encouraged its citizens to settle in the colonies.

# Illegal Entries Cont.

- South African Police records document numerous Portuguese, mostly of Madeiran origin, who crossed into South Africa illegally between 1941 and 1964. Most either disembarked illegally in Cape Town or went on to Lourenço Marques and were smuggled across the border (Glaser, 2010).
- South African and Portuguese East African police cooperated to break up several smuggling rings (Glaser, 2010).

# South African Citizenship and Social Integration: Keeping in

- Even legal immigrants were relatively slow to seek formal citizenship (Glaser, 2010: 68)
- Communities were inwardly focused, spoke Portuguese (with a Madeiran accent) among themselves, lived in insular 'ghettos' and clustered around local Catholic churches (Rensburg, 1971 )
- Women, who often followed men to South Africa and rarely found employment outside of the home, were particularly slow to integrate (Rensburg, 1971)
- Very few immigrants returned permanently to Madeira, but they retained strong links to the island.

# Madeirans' Integration cont.

- In spite of their low wages, many sent money back to Madeira to help families 'back home'. (Rensburg
- Madeiran families were regularly broken up for several years before opportunity allowed them to reunite in a host country.
- According to one estimate, Madeirans constituted roughly half of South Africa's Portuguese population by the mid 1980s (Marques, *SA Panorama*, April 1985)

# Portuguese Mainlanders

- The third wave of Portuguese came directly from Portugal about 1940 –1980, but concentrated in the 1960s and early 1970s.
- The Salazar regime, the *Estado Novo*, actively encouraged emigration during the 1960s.
- This had to do with a combination of high local unemployment and the huge benefits of remittances (Baganha, 2008)

# The Mozambique Route

- South Africa was a host of secondary status. According to official statistics about 22 000 immigrants arrived in South Africa from the Portuguese mainland between 1963 and 1971 (Leal, *cited in Glaser, 2010*).
- Mozambique: a Key Transit Point
- Even for these legal immigrants, Mozambique was a crucial transit point.
- Around a quarter of the mainlanders arrived via Mozambique between 1950 and 1972 (Glaser, 2010)



# This group was more educated and more Skilled

- These mainlander immigrants were relatively skilled compared to the Madeirans
- The 1960s immigrants were often actively recruited by the South African government.
- Most artisans and skilled workers who found work almost immediately on arrival.

# Opportunities in SA

- Mainland Portugal in the 1960s was facing economic depression: Industrial growth was uneven, unemployment was extremely high outside of the bigger towns and cities.
- The Salazar regime repressed its citizens and conscripted increasing numbers of young people to fight its colonial wars in Africa (Tozzo, 2005)
- The South African economy was booming and whites with skills could command good salaries. Housing was spacious; decent state health care and schooling were fairly accessible.

# Work and Integration: still in lower income Bracket

- Research by Botha and Van Rensburg suggests that even these better-off Portuguese immigrants were in the lowest income bracket of all European immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s
- While British and German immigrants tended to be well educated professionals, mainland Portuguese were more likely to be artisans or skilled workers. They were also known to be skilled boilermakers.

# Community Life: Remaining in

- Like the Madeirans, the newer Portuguese immigrants tended to cluster in particular neighbourhoods (the majority in the south of Johannesburg) where housing was relatively cheap (The Jo'burg Book, 2008).
- Houses were often shared by extended family and lodging was very common. So, although conditions were substantially better than those in Portugal, these immigrants were far from affluent in the 1960s and 1970s (Rensburg, 1971)

# Inter-community Relations: Becoming Good South African Citizens

- By the late 1960s and early 1970s, serious anxieties apparently surfaced in the Afrikaner community and political establishment over the growth of the Portuguese community.
- Afrikaner politicians began to question the open-door immigration policy and referred to Portuguese and some other southern European Catholic immigrants as 'undesirable' (Glaser, 2010).

# Not playing by the rules of apartheid adequately

- Concern over Portuguese lack of willingness to assimilate effectively into the Afrikaner community.
- 
- Portuguese immigrants tended to educate their children in English (unless they settled in small rural towns),
- 
- They were overwhelmingly Catholic, whereas the overwhelming majority of white South Africans were Protestant
- They tended to play 'English' sports like football rather than rugby.
- The difference in attitude based on past experience with relaxed racial policies in former Portuguese colonies

# End to open door white immigration policy by the end 1960s

- By the end of the 1960s the government seems to have retreated from its more open door white immigration policy and reverted to tighter restrictions on southern European Catholics

# Colonial Refugees: The last Massive Wave of Portuguese Migration

- The simultaneous collapse of the Portuguese colonial regimes in Mozambique and Angola in 1975 triggered the final mass wave of Portuguese migration to South Africa.
- While most of the colonists, especially from Angola, returned to Portugal, a sizeable proportion sought refuge in South Africa.



# Substantial Increase: 49000 to 300000

---

- The Peliz Family and Verney College in Rosettenville
- Their entrance made South Africa the home of the largest Portuguese African population, numbering about 49 000, but their number grew to 300,000.

# Apartheid Exaggerated Numbers?

---

- According to official figures 33 000 ex-colonial Mozambicans and 4000 Angolans settled permanently in South Africa (McDuling, 1995)

# Colonials Refugees were better Educated, but with no property

- This group was generally more skilled and educated than the resident South African Portuguese population.
- The South African, which was sympathetic to whites fleeing 'black rule', set up camps to absorb them.
- Local Portuguese charities and other groups also assisted in the refugees' integration.

# The Mozambican Portuguese and the Shift in Perception

- After the initial trauma of transition, this more educated wave of immigrants moved into the elite of South African Portuguese society and helped shift the image of the local Portuguese away from the farming and petty trader stereotype (Peliz, 2012)

# Then the Gap

- Although official figures tell us that only 108000 Portuguese immigrated to South Africa between 1940 and 1981, estimates of about half a million South Africans of Portuguese origin by the 1990s are not implausible.
- Finally, it is clear that for seventy or eighty years there was a steady flow of illegal Portuguese immigrants, mostly of Madeirans origin, who were not recorded in official statistics (Glaser, 2010).

# Conclusion on Migration: Pre and Post-Apartheid Emigration Trends

- Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique
- There are anecdotal evidence that Portuguese are leaving for Angola and Mozambique, but we don't know why, how many, for how long

# Reasons for Emigrating

- Crime
- Fear of Political Instability
- Portugal and Madeira's economic and political stability
- There is also preference for other destinations



**BREAK**



# PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

- To what extent did South Africans of Portuguese origin develop a coherent sense of identity?
- It is extremely difficult to say whether South African Portuguese have a coherent identity and if they do, when they developed that. This will require very substantive oral and other research.

# The Madeirans in Closed Communities

- Throughout most of the twentieth century, first generation Madeirans formed tight-knit communities which retained strong links to 'home'.
- There is evidence for this in places as diverse as Woodstock, Durban, Bloemfontein and the south of Johannesburg (Greater Rosettenville).

# Community and Identity Cont.

---

- They helped each other find jobs and accommodation; they socialised among each other;
- The Portuguese language was dominant in most aspects of their lives.
- They retained a keen interest in the affairs of Madeira.

# Community and Identity cont.

- Women, who tended to arrive a little later than their men and who generally worked as housewives, were tightly bound to their families and neighbourhoods and never acquired proficiency in local language.
- The Catholic Church played an important role in their social lives. In many community churches services were conducted exclusively in Portuguese (Machado, 2005)

# Mainlanders and Integration

---

- Similar claims can be made concerning the mainlanders who arrived in the 1940 and 1970s (Botha, 1995)

# The State Building of Public Facilities in Portuguese Neighbourhoods: a Moral Debt Hypothesis



# Inter-Portuguese Relations

## Mainlanders/Porto Region



## Madeirans



# Divisions Within

- There was not a strong cross-regional sense of 'Portuguese-ness' for many decades
- Living in distinct neighbourhoods
- There is some evidence to suggest that the Madeirans and mainlanders formed quite distinct communities until at least the 1970s.
- Relations have changed now due to social mobility




# Different Restaurants

The Mozambicans



La Perola Do Atlantico



- 
- Looking down on the uneducated
  - Although in many ways more established in South Africa, Madeirans were generally less educated, had lower incomes and felt as though the mainlanders looked down on them.
  - The Mozambican and Angolan groups added another layer which looked also down on the other Portuguese groups

# Divisions Within

---

- Regionally Defined Portuguese Associations
- Although there were over-arching Portuguese associations in major towns and cities by the 1970s, there were many more regionally defined Portuguese associations and social clubs.

# Forces Drawing Portuguese Together

- Language
- O Século

Established in 1963, grew substantially throughout the 1970s and 1980s. By the mid 1990s it claimed a circulation of 40 000 and a readership of well over 200 000.

# Community Media

- Radio Cidade
- In 1976 a regional Portuguese language radio station was launched. This was modernised and restructured in the early 1990s as *Radio Cidade*. The station, which is now predominantly in English, claims a listenership of two-thirds of the South African Portuguese community.

# Community Media Cont.

---

- Television: *M-Net Portuguesa*
- In 1989 Portuguese media expanded into television with the launch of *M-Net Portuguesa*. By the mid 1990s they claimed 80 000 subscribers (McDuling, 1995).

# Other Activities

---

- The Catholic Churches and their social events
- Sport Clubs in the 1960s in South of Johannesburg
- Cultural Centres and Unions
- Restaurants and bars

# Divisions are Insignificant Now

---

- In his 1995 study of language use in southern Johannesburg, McDuling found the Madeirans-mainlanders social divide to be insignificant (cited in Glaser, 2010).



# New Research Lines

- Role of community media in easing inter-Portuguese identity
- New generations and the Portuguese community
- New Trends in Portuguese migration and immigration in South Africa and the region
- Old Vs new Integration processes, compared to Jewish, Indians, and Chinese cases

# New Research Lines



- New Trends in Portuguese migration and immigration in South Africa and the region
- Old Vs new Integration processes
- comparisons to Jewish, Indians, and Chinese cases
- Instances of transnationalism and Hybridity of identity?

# New Research Lines

---

- The Portuguese emigrants who settled in South Africa over many decades, with their extraordinarily diverse experiences and connections, make a fascinating case study of transnationalism.

# Research Lines Cont.



- What are the patterns of mobility and remittance between the 'home' and 'host' society?
- How do the different layers of immigrants (in terms of timing and regional origin) interact with one another?
- What role do language and religion play in communal identity?

# Research Lines...



- How is identity affected by the shift from one generation to the next?
- Why are some immigrant groups and sub-groups materially more successful than others?
- How do racial and political identities play out against a backdrop of segregation and apartheid?



**Obrigado/Thank you/Gracias**