

**RELIGION, IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY -
THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF PORTUGUESE WOMEN
IN DURBAN**

by

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RELIGION, IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF PORTUGUESE WOMEN IN DURBAN

SUMMARY

This descriptive study investigates the link between religion, (institutional and private) identity (ethnic and personal) and the community (Portuguese and South African) in the context of religious and cultural pluralism. It analyses sixteen Portuguese women in Durban - nine Roman Catholics, five Protestants and two agnostic and it is executed within the framework of the theory of conditionalism or 'radical relationality', as expounded by J.S. Kruger.

The religious practice, experience and identity of the participants are explored, and their social integration as well as family and marital relationships (with special reference to submissiveness) are examined in the light of Catholic Feminist theology. The influence of their experiences on their religion and vice-versa, as well as the fluidity of their identities are analysed.

The results of the study highlight the paradoxical role of religion, as well as a decline in ethnic identity and Catholicism.

Key terms: Religion; Identity; Community; Portuguese Women Immigrants; Conditionalism; Ethnicity

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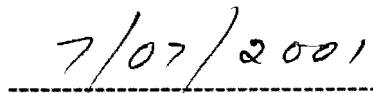
STATEMENT

I declare that *Religion, Identity and Community - The religious life of Portuguese Women in Durban*, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Victoria Pereira", written over a horizontal dashed line.

SIGNATURE

M V PEREIRA

A handwritten date "7/07/2001" written in a simple, slightly slanted font, positioned above a horizontal dashed line.

DATE

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Maria Victória Pereira". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Maria Victória Pereira

Durban, November 2000

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

The experience of Portuguese women in South Africa is varied. They have come from different places and backgrounds - from Madeira and Portugal, and as refugees from Angola and Mozambique during and after the struggle for independence in the Portuguese African territories. Some have already been born in this country. Many struggled hard to adapt to their new environment without even knowing the language, others came with a good education and easily mixed with the white South African population. Regardless of their differences they are united by their language, a sense of Portugueseness and a great love and dedication to the family, for whom they have often sacrificed personal dreams, specially the first generation of women immigrants, who often worked hard hand in hand with their husbands contributing to their success in the market place, without much recognition. Many Portuguese women are also united by their religion as the majority are Roman Catholic.

1.1 Problem Formulation

This study is an attempt to establish the link between religion, identity, and community among Portuguese women in Durban. Although the majority remain true to tradition and are therefore Roman Catholics, there are some who have converted to Protestant

churches. This raises a number of questions. Are the women maintaining their personal, ethnic and religious identity or is this disintegrating as they enter into the larger South African society with its religious and cultural pluralism? What is the role of religion in the maintenance or transcendence of their personal and ethnic identities? Are there factors in their personal identity development that are impacting on their religious convictions? If, on the other hand, a notable change in their identities is not evident, are they perhaps isolating themselves from the broader society in order to uphold their ethnic identities? How does religion influence their social network? How does religion influence their family and marital relationships? Does it contribute to submissiveness of women in the marriage? What is the influence of the devotion to the Virgin Mary on the same issue? Is the thinking of these women in line with that of Catholic feminist theologians? Are there differences between Catholics and Protestants regarding satisfaction with their churches' teachings and regarding the influence of the churches on their social bonding? What are the main inter-generational differences? What will the future hold for these women regarding their religion, ethnicity and social integration?

These questions form the basis of this enquiry which, it is hoped, will contribute to extant knowledge on the interaction of religion, personal identity, and community in the personal and social development of women in general.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this research is J.S. Krüger's theory of conditionalism or "radical relationality" (Krüger 1995:21) which draws on the notions of togetherness

and interconnectedness, and which includes, but also transcends, Mol's concept of religion as "the sacralization of identity", meaning the power of religion to emotionally weld an individual's identity by offering an answer to the questions of "Who am I?" and "What am I here for?" . .

Krüger's theory, which is informed by the philosophies of William James, Alfred North Whitehead, Carl Gustav Jung and also Buddhism, offers a conceptual framework where events and trends are examined within a free play of possibilities and as points of inter-relatedness and mutually effected contingency. This theory posits that the experienced world is an active interplay of forces and relations that condition each other and the identity of the individual, and the tenor of society is therefore constantly in flux, never still and continually changing.

For Krüger, a sense of wonder is at the basis of religion, as well as science and art, and there are three ways in which one can try to reach the religious meaning of things: through meditation, science and hermeneutics (Ibid:34). These paths intersect and influence each other, which is why dialogue is important between the different fields of knowledge, from physics to theology. Krüger's theory of conditionalism is based on a triangle - person, nature and society (Ibid:35). Individuals are conditioned biologically and socially, through family, language, education and religion. In other words, through culture, as well as through their interaction with the natural environment. In fact, it was probably through their experiencing wonder in the splendour of nature that the first hominids started relating to a higher power, dancing to bring rain and keeping the flames of fire burning. Thus, it can be said that through nature, the divine was born. It is

Krüger's contention that to be human is to be religious - that is, to search for "cosmic orientation" (Ibid:151).

1.2.1 Religion

Religion can be seen in a number of ways, one of which is something clear and somehow measurable, for instance, the historical traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. In this type of definition one can go the way of exclusivity and disregard any system of thought that does not include a belief in the supernatural, or one can opt for inclusivity and thus incorporate systems such as nationalism and ideologies. Alternatively, religion can also be seen in a general broad framework as something that enables people to transcend their loneliness and lack of meaning in life. Krüger (1995:57) describes religion as a:

spiral movement towards ultimate width and depth, ultimate openness
and coherence consisting in the ... mutually inherent experiences of
integration and transcendence ...

Religion can be important for integration, either as a means of consolidating an ethnic group, like the Portuguese immigrants at the Portuguese Church of San Jose in Durban, or as an assimilating factor when the same immigrants choose to worship in a South African church, and still get a feeling of belonging, of being under a "sacred canopy". The integrating function has both an objective and a subjective aspect, as it refers both to the world as experienced and to the person that experiences it (Ibid:56). The world provides a sense of integration and the person has a feeling of integrity. Integration is

related to identity. It is related to security and the need to fight for survival. It is the opposite of alienation, and it is about feeling whole, accepted and at ease in one's environment. It is related to collective feelings and values, to a sense of community and it has to do with one's involvement in a community regarding work, social relationships, systems of meaning and values.

Religion carries the symbolism and tradition that reinforce social structures, but it can also function as the inspiration for change. It carries within itself the seeds of change, which explains the many divisions, sects, adaptations and transformations experienced throughout history. Religions can be both the consolidator of society as well as its transformative yeast.

Humans are not merely passive receivers of culture, they are also conditioned to be "response-able" and they have the power to react to challenges, to create new identities, new forms of religion and new forms of society. People, societies, and religions are usually moving "along edges" on the borders between chaos and order, breaking frameworks, creating new ones, not completely, always carrying something of the past but aiming at a new coherence, always in search of a deeper meaning, a better sense of relatedness, a feeling of being psychologically, morally and socially in balance and in tune with the universe.

Religion therefore also entails transcendence of existing, given frameworks of integration. Integration and transcendence are both part of "conditioning", of reconstituting the past and creating the future at every moment (Krüger 1995:128-129).

People are confronted and challenged by all the circumstances around them, be it a hurricane, a revolution, a scientific discovery, some wonder in nature or an archetypal explosion of the unconscious into consciousness. Those experiences can lead to a transcending movement, which entails moving outward to capture and inward to comprehend, a moving beyond existing crystallisations, towards new crystallisations in a new integration, forming new identities, new nodes of “radical relationality”, never static, always in flux.

In today's world certainty does not usually last long. Humans are points of intersection between what affects them and what is affected by them. In fact “temporality is humanity's hallmark” in this conditionalist perspective. (Ibid:105).

Krüger's theory implies that there is no arrest in a specific form, since people and the world are ever-changing, ever-interacting. It does not mean an absence of continuity in time: I am the person who remembers experiencing yesterday and hopes or fears the future. However, what I believe in, my values, what gives meaning to my life, in short, my identity, can change.

1.2.2 Identity and the loss of identity

Under a conditionalist perspective identity is a result of a fluid process of transcending and integrating.

Identity can be classified as personal or social, or rather it runs through the spectrum

from personal to social, with more limited forms of group identity in between (Mol 1976:143). Some psychological theories concentrate on the individual and his or her self-realisation or individuation as the source of identity. Marxism advocates self-realisation through labour and the consolidation of a more balanced society.

Group identity can refer, for example, to religious sects or feminist groups. Social identity, according to Mol (Ibid:143), refers to “whatever provides a society, tribe or nation with its own unique wholeness”. Ethnic identity refers to:

a feeling of attachment and affiliation toward an ethnic group based upon social roles thought to be appropriate for interaction within the group and upon meaningful cultural symbols, values and behaviours (Bennett 1976:8).

Identity can be located in an individual's class, family, nation and/or race and it can be related to birth, wealth, achievement and power. Identity is related to meaning and to feelings of belonging and, according to Mol (1976:66), “it has a connotation with boundary and place”. It is a way of relating to the world, of seeing oneself in the world, of knowing what one is and in what one believes and how to behave. It is a way of bringing some order to the chaos that surrounds us. Because of this it is often jealously defended as it is painful to change our perceptions of ourselves and with it our familiar ways of acting in the world.

Mol (1976:ix) argues that “religion is the sacralization of identity”, through rituals (such as, marriage, and rites-of-passage). But those rites are also a process of de-sacralizing

previous identities, and as such, entail transcendence and new integrations.

Religion does not stand alone in forming an individual's identity or character and it can both consolidate and change it, and religion itself can be influenced by the changes in society. South Africa is a good example of this, as we see the changes taking place in political and religious policies relative especially to racial and gender issues. Sex, sport or drugs can also become loci of identity, means an individual can use to transcend feelings of alienation or isolation and to find meaning and a sense of wholeness.

In today's pluralistic world, identity is far from being monolithic and can become manifold and even paradoxical. Change, interaction and "angst" are features of modern life, and the loci of identity change as the person is confronted with new situations, new information, new experience, being pulled into an outward movement to capture and an inward movement to absorb, to understand and to make the new, part of her or his sense of a balanced self.

Modern identities are often self-made, multiple and changing and that could be an indicator not of "contemporary social fluidity and some kind of dispossession" but of a new equilibrium and self-confidence (Young, in Pinto 1998:1). I understand this as indicating an ability to remain poised, integrating and transcending, and integrating again, knowing that nothing is permanent, everything is conditioned.

1.2.3 Community

A community is a group of people who share common resources, both material and intellectual, and this includes culture and religion. Smith (in Pinto 1998:8) says that a:

community comprises various interrelated social and cultural institutions, including educational, religious, and recreational, that may take a permanent physical form within the community.

L S Jung (1980:7), author of *Identity and Community: A Social Introduction to Religion* maintains that “the significance of religion in grounding identity and community makes two difficulties peculiar to our time, over-choice and confusion, only more pressing”.

But, according to Krüger (1995:129):

both the past and the future may be opened up - the past by reinterpretation and reintegration with the ongoing process of life; the future by picking up the signals of new possibilities, being open to surprises, and assuming responsibility for the ongoing process of life.

Because in modern society there can be so many co-existing religions and religious sects, the individual can feel his or her identity threatened. Religion is an important element in identity formation and in South Africa, for example, where many cultures and religions walk side-by-side in public organisations, the business world, and in schools, people are constantly faced with challenges to their beliefs and while in some it arouses curiosity and exploration, in others it arouses fear and insecurity. But if the individual can learn to be open to re-interpreting past knowledge and experience in the

light of new concepts or developments, a new sense of empowerment and freedom can take place, as well as an awareness of a new responsibility towards contributing to changes in the individual and in the community to which she or he belongs.

Portuguese women immigrants are part of a community living within a larger community, home of many other smaller communities. The challenge to them and to all others in South Africa is to become open to change, to learn from the past and from each other and to believe in the future.

In this research, when I refer to the "South African community", I mean the white Afrikaans- and English-speaking community in South Africa with whom the Portuguese have the most contact. In Durban (part of "the last outpost") the majority of the white South African community is English-speaking. When I refer to the "larger South African community" I refer to South Africans of all races and ethnic groups, the majority of whom are black, although in Durban there is a very high incidence of Indians.

1.3 Context of the Inquiry

According to G.H. Vahed (1995:5), a scholar who did research on the identity of Indians in Durban:

Durban is the most cosmopolitan city in South Africa in racial and cultural terms. While the Zulus form the bulk of the population, there are large numbers of Indians and whites with different foods, dress,

customs and religions. This cultural variation is reflected in the churches, mosques and temples.

In 1989 the estimated population in Durban was close to four million of whom 69 000 were Coloureds, 381 000 Whites, 624 000 Indians and 2 301 000 Africans, and of those, 43% - mostly Africans - lived "in informal shack settlements all over the city primarily on broken and hilly land" (Ibid:5). On the whole, the population still lives racially segregated in different residential areas although there has been quite an influx of Africans into town, especially into the Smith Street and Victoria Embankment area.

The history and present state of Portuguese people in Durban will be discussed in the next chapter.

2. METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT HISTORY

This research is ideographic and qualitative rather than quantitative and I adopted the phenomenological approach. It is mainly a descriptive study but some comparison of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Portuguese women in Durban was done. The study is not statistically representative and generalisations cannot be made to all Portuguese women in South Africa.

My interest in the religion of the Portuguese women in Durban arose from my own experience as a Catholic woman immigrant and my interest in the devotion to the Virgin Mary through an experience of synchronicity many years ago. That experience directed

me to try to determine the effects of an individual's religious beliefs. I have always been interested in inter-faith understanding, how people experience their faith, how they internalise it, and how they express it in their daily lives.

Throughout my research I tried to avoid personal bias, which is part of the phenomenological method, i.e. "epoché", the bracketing of one's preconceived ideas to ensure that observed phenomena will emerge as pure as possible. This I did, not by trying to ignore my own assumptions and opinions, but by noting my own thoughts and emotional reactions to what was said by the interviewees. I also tried to not interrupt them in their way of expressing themselves unless I needed to do so for clarification.

I worked with raw, concrete data and I looked for patterns - but I did not try to formulate theory. Openness to the data is part of the phenomenological approach and, as such, I allowed the phenomena to speak for themselves. As facts were established, I tried to understand their meaning for the interviewees, analysing concepts and categorising them.

I focussed on each woman's story and her interpretation thereof, which did not exclude some kind of extrapolation and tentative conclusion.

Although I did have an interview schedule and questionnaire (see Appendix 1) it was intended only as an additional tool. It was based partly on Linda Anne Bennett's questionnaire for her study on ethnic identity (unpublished PhD thesis *Patterns of Ethnic Identity among Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in Washington, D.C.* 1976).

I started researching the Portuguese in Durban more than five years ago, when I interviewed 13 people in depth besides taking notes after normal conversations. I became involved with the Portuguese community through the Portuguese Women's League in Durban, of which I am now President, and became a parishioner of the Portuguese Church of *San José* where I attended Mass and participated in processions and social functions. I did informal and unstructured interviews with both men and women. I also gathered information through informal conversations, which I noted down as soon as possible afterwards. In 1997 I was asked to do research on the Portuguese in South Africa during the apartheid era as part of a study on the social minorities in South Africa. I interviewed a number of Portuguese people and some South African men and women, to gather information on the Portuguese in general in both Durban and Johannesburg. I read my work - which is the basis of Chapter 2 - at the 41st Annual meeting of the American African Studies Association in Chicago in 1998. For that study I had interviewed 14 men and women in Durban and the Gauteng area, including the Portuguese Consul in Durban, Mr Samuel Gomes Samuel, and the editor of the Portuguese newspaper *O Século*, in Johannesburg, Mr Varela Afonso.

For the present research on Portuguese women in Durban I interviewed 16 participants. This means that added to my previous work - background to this research - I interviewed altogether about fifty people, women and men.

Regarding this research, when I did my first interviews I did not tape those that I felt would not be at ease and I waited to create some rapport. Later on I interviewed them again and all but one accepted to be taped. The same issues were often discussed. The

interviews are confidential. I have 20 cassettes, some of 90 minutes, the majority of 60 minutes, and some cassettes have more than one interview.

I commenced the interviews by explaining what the research was about and assuring the participants of anonymity. I then asked them to tell me anything they wanted to about themselves, their families, their experiences as women immigrants or descendants of immigrants, and their most meaningful experiences. I then either took notes or asked if they would mind me taping the interviews. The notes were typed and the tapes were transcribed, if possible within a day. Some women had difficulty in telling their stories, but the majority spoke quite freely and I believe I established good rapport. During the second interview - which were all taped but for one - they were quite open but I did not probe too much regarding married life as, being Portuguese myself, I know that family matters are usually considered very private. I also contacted most participants over the phone to clarify issues.

In conclusion, I tried to be faithful to the phenomenological approach by bracketing my own ideas and trying to understand the women in their own terms. On the other hand, if they asked my personal opinion, I would be straightforward but at the same time avoid any confrontational discussion. If I felt that my opinion could be hurtful or misunderstood, I would suggest that we talk about the issue at a later stage when there would be more time available.

Regarding the literature survey, in 1997, at the time that I was preparing the paper on the Portuguese in South Africa to be presented in Chicago, I consulted various

Portuguese and South African newspapers and more than 2000 entries on the Portuguese in the State Archives, besides other literature which included the book *Portugueses e Moçambicanos no Apartheid. Da Ficção A Realidade* (1986), written by V P da Rosa and S Trigo, on the Portuguese and Mozambicans in South Africa. Although a good historical background for this present work, it is far removed from the type of research conducted in this study, which explores the link between community, identity and religion, with special emphasis on the Portuguese women in Durban.

I started this particular research by reading works that could give me an idea about the sort of questions that I should ask. The work of academic L A Bennet: *Patterns of Ethnic Identity among Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Washington, DC.* (1976) done in Washington on the Serbs and Croats served as a guideline, helping me to set the questionnaire applicable to my project.

After having done most of the interviews I read Verónica Pinto's work on the identity of the Portuguese in Durban: *Roots and Routes - The (RE) Constructing of Portuguese Identity in Durban* (1998). In a private conversation, Pinto and I agreed on the mobility of the sense of identity among some members of the Portuguese community, especially the second generation, for whom the location of their own identity is sometimes blurred and varies, as they sometimes feel Portuguese and sometimes South African.

3. AREAS RESEARCHED

Certain areas were part of the initial interview schedule and they include aspects on:

- *biographical factors*, which included birthplace, educational level, religious affiliation, household details, life history;
- *demographic factors*, including earliest contacts upon arrival; assistance received on arrival in the country and from whom, and the kind of contacts they have with friends and family;
- *theological tenets*, which referred to their religious beliefs and conceptions of God. I considered theological those questions on how they experience God in their lives and how they accept or not their church's teachings. It also includes the submissiveness of women in marriage in relation to religious practice, the influence of the Bible and their devotion to the Virgin Mary;
- *gender aspects*, which referred to their conceptions about the nature of men and women, for example, homosexuality and the roles of man and woman;
- *emotional and experiential issues*, which took into consideration their inner feelings and well-being, with emphasis on meaningful experiences in their lives, besides possible influences in their psychological structure. It also includes questions regarding self and identity;
- *ethical factors*, where I paid attention to their feelings of responsibility towards others, their perceptions of commitment to marriage and family, their attitudes towards sexuality and social responsibility;
- *social issues*, which included an inquiry into their interest in politics, membership in Portuguese and South African associations and their social network.

By analysing these I tried to establish the relationship between how they saw

themselves, their experiences, their religion and their involvement in the community, both Portuguese and English-speaking.

4. LITERATURE SURVEY

Although, no work has been done specifically on Portuguese women in South Africa, this survey will list literature of related interest for the purpose of situating the study against a broader background of academic discourse. The review comprises literature on Catholic feminist theology, the Portuguese in South Africa, feminism in general, identity religion and community, ethnic identity, the Virgin Mary and the influence of her ideology on women.

Mary Daly, the famous radical Catholic feminist, who eventually left the Catholic Church, has to her credit books that are milestones in the history of feminism and the struggle against patriarchy. Some of her works are: *The Church and the Second Sex* (1975), *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1979), *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy* (1984) and *Beyond God the Father* (1986). Regardless of the author's excellent intellectual capacities, originality and vision, I agree with the opinion of other Catholic feminist theologians that her radical views have alienated her from feminists who would want to continue dialogue with the Church. In the opinion of those Christian theologians, feminists have to try and reinterpret the Bible under an hermeneutics of suspicion and of liberation of women, exorcising the texts which influenced by patriarchy have instigated the oppression of women, considering such texts not inspired by God. As Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1984:84) writes:

any social and cultural feminist transformation in Western society must deal constructively with biblical religion and its continuing impact on American culture. American women are not able to completely discard and forget our personal, cultural and religious history.

According to her, we must deal constructively with the Bible and use it as a liberating force or else it will continue to foster and justify the subjection of women by men.

Outstanding Catholic feminist theologians, such as Fiorenza and Rosemary Radford Ruether, chose to try and change the Church from within. Considering that "women are church" they try to encourage the changes needed to eliminate the sexism that exists in the churches' structures. "Women-Church" represents the women that for the first time have got together and proclaimed that they are church, claiming:

the tradition of the exodus community as a community of liberation from patriarchy. This means that patriarchy is rejected as God's will (Ruether 1985:57).

Ruether writes with penetrating power of analysis, denouncing and deconstructing established patriarchal twists which have influenced the church and its understanding of God. In *"New women. New earth. Sexist ideologies and human liberation"* (1975), she indicates, like Mary Daly, that traditional imagery of God as father has contributed to a hierarchical society based on dominion and subservience. Some of her many other books are *Mary - the feminine face of God* (1977), *Sexism and God-talk: toward a feminist theology* (1983) and *Women-church: theology and practice of feminist*

liturgical communities (1985). For this theologian:

four themes are essential to the prophetic-liberating tradition of Biblical faith: 1) God's defence and vindication of the oppressed; 2) the critique of the dominant systems of power and of the powerholders ... ; 3) the vision of a new age ... in which.... God's intended reign of justice is installed ... and 4) the critique of ideology, or of religion ... (Ruether 1983:24).

and for her:

Women as the church represent those subjugated people who have been lifted up by the emptying out of God's power in Jesus. They have been empowered to become conscious and self-actualizing persons. Women represent the church in the same way that Jesus also makes the 'poor', the nobodies of the earth, represent the head of that new humanity which will lead the way into the redeemed world (Ibid 1977:86).

Some of Fiorenza's well-known works are: *Bread not stone: the challenge of feminist biblical interpretation* (1984); *In memory of her: a feminist theological reconstruction of Christian origins* (1983); *Revelation: vision of a just world* (1991) and *Sharing her world: feminist biblical interpretation in context* (1998). As expressed by a New York times Book Review, she "stands among the most articulate and respected theologians who have challenged the silence and marginality that have characterised the great majority of Christian women for nearly 2,000 years ...". Her discussion of biblical hermeneutics is balanced and challenging. In Fiorenza's (1984:x) opinion:

a feminist hermeneutics cannot trust or accept Bible and tradition

simply as divine revelation. Rather it must critically evaluate them as patriarchal articulations

and:

dialectical mode of biblical interpretation that can do justice to women's experiences of the Bible as a thoroughly patriarchal book written in androcentric language as well as to women's experience of the Bible as a source of empowerment and vision in our struggle for liberation (Ibid:xiii).

The test of validity of a Scriptural text as the Word of God, must be whether it seeks "to end relations of domination and exploitation" (Ibid).

Mary Jo Weaver, in *New Catholic Women: A Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority* (1985), says in her introduction that the book "is about women's attempts to create life for themselves in an environment that is often harmful to them."

It is about women's awareness that they, too, can be leaders. It ends with an analysis of Roman Catholic feminist spirituality:

This book has been organised around the need to change structures and to resist patriarchal patterns of authority. It has focussed very much on women's work - practical, political, intellectual - and action (Weaver 1985:212).

The work of V P da Rosa and S Trigo on the Portuguese and Mozambicans in South Africa, *Portugueses e Moçambicanos no Apartheid. Da Ficção A Realidade* (1986), is a

descriptive study of the history and emigration of Portuguese and Mozambicans in South Africa and their influence on the economy of this country and explains how the Portuguese adapted in a country which at the time was subject to world wide animosity because of its racist policies.

The Durban academic Samantha N. Mohanlal in *The Emergent Hindu Women in a Changing South Africa* (1998), studies the interplay between religion and culture, with special emphasis on the Indian women in Durban.

On the issue of ethnicity, two dissertations by Durban academics are of particular interest: Veronica Pinto did research on the Portuguese in Durban and in her work *Roots and Routes - The (RE) Constructing of Portuguese Identity in Durban* (1998), she looks at the relationship between identity and location, her contention being that "place" no longer provides a strong basis for identity, as culture and identity are being de-territorialised. Goolam H. Vahed, who is from Durban but studied in the USA, did research on the Indians in Durban. *The Making of Indian Identity in Durban, 1914-1949* (1995) is a politico-historical work which gives a perspective on identity formation and social influence, and highlights the complexity of Indian identity.

Other consulted works on ethnic identity already mentioned in section 2, include research done in Washington on the Serbs and Croats by the academic L A Bennet (1976) and in the UK on the Polish, by the academic J Marzec (1988). Bennet's work, *Patterns of Ethnic Identity among Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Washington, DC*, focuses on the clues to the relationship between socialisation, decision-making and

values and how it can affect ethnic identity

The work of Marzec, *The role of the Polish Roman Church in the Polish Community of the UK: A Study in Ethnic Identity and Religion*, deals with ethnicity and its relationship to religion. There are some striking differences between the Polish and the Portuguese regarding the degree of attachment to the mainland versus a sense of Catholicism and national identity. Whilst a strong connection is found amongst Polish people, the Portuguese connections are more fluid.

The American scholar L. Shannon Jung, in *Identity and Community: A Social Introduction to Religion* (1980), puts in perspective some of the issues relative to identity and faith, focusing on religious identity and on the diversity of religious communities existing in American society. L. S. Jung is of the opinion that both personal identity and social community are “grounded in religion” and as such religion plays a role in their co-existence. According to this author it is practically impossible “not to be religious” or believe in something that functions as a religion.

Regarding the Virgin Mary and her influence on women, two particular works are of interest. One is Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's “Feminist Spirituality, Christian Identity, and Catholic Vision”, in *Woman Spirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*, edited by C P Christ and J Plaskow, (1979:136-148). In her opinion:

The traditions about the Goddess and those of the New Testament are conflated in the Catholic community's cult of Mary (which increased in proportion the more) God became patriarchalized (Ibid:138).

She looks at what for her are the positives of her Catholic faith but highlights the need to:

uncover Christian theological traditions and myths that perpetuate sexist ideologies, violence and alienation” (Ibid:146).

A remarkable book, informative and insightful, is *Alone of all her sex* ([1976] 1990), by Marina Warner. In it she depicts the Virgin Mary as a myth full of contradictions which contributed to limiting women's roles. In *Afterthoughts* at the end of the second edition, she writes that if she were writing the book again: “I would try to pay more attention to the voices raised in Mary's praise” and:

Yet the paradox remains that the cult of the Virgin, while communicating a multi-layered concept of ideal womanhood ... also remains an extraordinary and fertile site of the feminine, constantly available for questioning and re-shaping (Warner 1990:344).

Two encyclicals from Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II show the modern approach of the Roman Catholic Church to this cult. In *For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Paul VI speaks of Mary as the New Woman, highlighting her siding with the poor and depicting her as a woman of strength. John Paul II's *Redemptoris Mater*, (1987), is a review of the “precise place” of Mary in God's plan of salvation (Ibid:3) “(She) ‘precedes’ us all at the head of the long line of witnesses of faith in the one Lord” (Ibid:67). Although these are attempts by the Catholic Church to depict Mary in a more humanised manner, for feminists in general the Virgin Mary is still a symbol of some kind of enslaved goddess.

5. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

An attempt was made to have a balance regarding the age, profession and religious practice of the participants, the majority of whom were practising Portuguese Catholic women. I also tried to bring in participants from various places of origin - Portugal, Mozambique, Angola, Madeira or elsewhere. For that effect I chose either women I met in my involvement with the Portuguese Church and the Portuguese Women's League or women who were indicated to me by other participants and who fitted one or more of the above categories - the snowball effect.

The ages of the sixteen women participants ranged from 20 to 65: five from 20-30 years old; two from 31-40; one between 41-50; two between 51-60 and six between 61-65 years old.

The categorisation of first and second generation has not yet found agreement amongst scholars. The system I have chosen is described below:

I considered *first-generation* seven of the participants: four who arrived with their children in South Africa; three who arrived at the ages of 18 and 21 with their parents or alone and married in South Africa.

The other nine are considered *second-generation*: four who arrived in South Africa with their parents - two aged 5 and two aged 14 - and five who were born in South Africa.

I considered *third-generation* the children of *second-generation* Portuguese immigrants.

Of the sixteen participants eleven are married, three are single and two are widows. Of the married women, four are Protestants. Seven married Portuguese men and four married foreigners - three married South Africans and one married a British citizen who has been living in South Africa for decades since his youth. Of the four women married to foreigners, two are Protestants married to South Africans. One husband is a Methodist and the other an Anglican, and they both converted to that Pentecostalist type of church at the same time as the wives. The other two women are Roman Catholics and both husbands were Anglicans but one of the husbands does not practise his faith and sometimes goes with his wife to the Catholic church, and the other one converted to Catholicism before getting married (but this couple rarely attends church). As to the seven women married to Portuguese men, two are Protestants, and one is married to a Protestant (they met as Protestants) and the other one is married to a non-practising Catholic. As to the other five women, one is a non-practising Catholic married to a non-practising Catholic, and the other four are Catholic women married to Catholics, but three of the husbands do not practise as well, and the other one goes rarely to church.

Seven of the participants came from Mozambique, one from Angola, one from Rhodesia and two from Portugal. Of the participants born in South Africa, the parents of two of them came from Angola and Mozambique, the parents of another one were from Portugal and the parents of the other two came from Madeira. With the exception of two young women, those who came from Mozambique and Angola were born in Portugal. With this I intend to show the diversity of origins and geographic mobility,

although either the participants or their parents were originally from Portuguese territories.

Under the category practising religious women there are seven Roman Catholics and five Protestants. Under the category religious but not practising regularly there are two, and as to non-religious - meaning not attending church, not praying or praying rarely - there are two. When considering religious education, twelve learned Catechism and went to church when young, three did not, and one did not finish Catechism. Of the two non-religious women, one was educated in a convent for six years between the ages of five and eleven, and the other had no religious education.

Regarding education, four have university degrees, one has Matric, six under Matric, and five have technical diplomas. As to professions, there are nine house executives, one student, one social worker, one beautician, one accountant, and three are in the travelling and trading business.

Regarding citizenship, nine have dual Portuguese and South African nationality, and seven are Portuguese.

Table I shows the different religious affiliations of the participants, their marital status, whether they are employed, where they came from, their husband's religion, their education and their professions.

TABLE I

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Married</u>		<u>Widows</u>		<u>Single</u>	<u>Employed</u>		<u>Origin</u>	<u>Husbands' Religion</u>		<u>Education</u>	<u>Professions</u>	
	Port	Non-P	Port	Non-P		Yes	No	Moçamb. Angola Portugal Rhodesia S. Africa	Catholic Protestant Non/P. Ca Non/P. Pr		University Tech Dip Matric Under Mat.	Hse Exec. Trading Travelling Social Worker	Beautician Accountant Student
Catholics 9	4	2	2	0	1	4	5	Moçamb. 4 S A 2 Ang 1 Port. 1 Rhod 1	Cath. 5 N/P Ca 2 N/P Pr. 1		Univers. 3 Tech. Dip. 1 Matric 1 Under Mat. 4	Hse Ex. 5 Trading 2 Travelling 1 Social w. 1	
Protestants 5	2	2	0	0	1	1	4	Moç. 2 Port. 1 S.A. 2	Protest 3 N/P Ca 1		Tech Dip. 3 Under Mat. 2	Hse. Ex. 4 Beautician 1	
Non-church Members* 2	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	S.A. 1 Moç. 1	N/P Ca. 1		Univ. 1 Tech Dip. 1	Student 1 Accountant 1	
16	7	4	2	0	3	6	10	16	13		16		16

* Non-practising Catholics

6. ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA AND VALIDATION

The interviews were summarised, typed and then analysed and compiled into tables according to topics. The tables reflected the number of persons who agreed on each topic, as well as the dissenting views, and these formed the basis of the chapters that follow. For clarification and validation, I sometimes contacted the interviewees to obtain their reaction to my analysis of their statements, to which they usually agreed.

7. LAYOUT OF THE REPORT

This report comprises six chapters. Chapter 2 is about the early history of the Portuguese in South Africa and specifically the Durban area. It also sketches the two periods of Portuguese immigration and two periods of emigration in the South African history and gives a short description of the status of the Portuguese community in the country today. Chapter 3 analyses the religious practice, experience and identity of Portuguese women in Durban. Their affiliation to institutionalised religion as well as their personal religious experiences are explored in order to gauge the influence thereof on their identities. Chapter 4 deals with family, marriage and gender. Family ties, marital relationships and opinions on exogamous marriages and on gender are examined to establish the role of religion in their identity, and especially its influence regarding submissiveness of women in the marriage. Opinions and experiences are analysed in the light of Catholic feminist thinking. Chapter 5 analyses their social network and integration in the community, both Portuguese and South African, and explores issues such as language and the role of the churches in the maintenance or erosion of ethnic

identity. Chapter 6, the conclusion, includes an overview of the results of this research on the link between religion, identity and community. The influence of religion in their identity and social integration is summarised, as well as, vice versa, the influence of the development of their identity on their religious beliefs and practices. An indication of the areas which need further research is given, followed by a brief discussion on what could be the future for the Portuguese women in Durban in relation to their religion and the Portuguese and South African community in that city.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PORTUGUESE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Between Chaos and Order

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of the Portuguese in South Africa, like the history of most immigrants, is a story of change and struggle to maintain identity, but also a story of fluctuation and adaptation in their attempts to understand and come to terms with the new environment and its people. This chapter gives an outline of the history and events that make up the background against which Portuguese immigrant women construct their identities. In many cases, for political and historical reasons, these women have experienced the effects of chaos and order.

2. THE EARLY YEARS

In July 1497, during the reign of Don Manuel, Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon and after rounding the Cape of Storms (which he renamed the Cape of Good Hope), he anchored in the area he called *Natal* (Portuguese for Christmas) at Christmas time. Setting sail again he arrived in India in May 1498. Soon Portugal, a small country with a small population, became the richest and most commanding country in the world.

The Portuguese people are part of South Africa's history in many ways. In the opinion of Rosa and Trigo (1986:32), who refer to various sources, including a report by Prof Marius Valkhoff¹, Portuguese was the second official language of the Cape in the 17th century. It was undoubtedly the only one that could be called *lingua franca* as it was the vehicle used for communication amongst the different inhabitants in the Cape, although as they say, there are authors who make a point in disregarding this fact (Rosa & Trigo 1986:32). The attitude of a Cape governor in the second half of the 17th century shows how ingrained Portuguese was - Cape Governor, Rijklof van Goens threatened to have the beards shaved and hats removed from anyone caught speaking Portuguese (Valkhoff in Rosa & Trigo 1986:34). Citing Pattee, Rosa and Trigo (1986:34) indicate that it appears that Jan van Riebeeck had been censured by the head office of the Company of Eastern Indies, the "XVII Lords of Amsterdam", because he spoke Portuguese with his servants.

Tales of Portuguese shipwrecks add flavour and interest to the story of South Africa. They are tragic tales of courage, survival, cruelty, hope and despair. The reports of Portuguese survivors were important in that they provided the first written records on the fauna, flora and indigenous people of Southern Africa.

At a time when we are trying to extract from past history specific deeds of women, it is appropriate to remember some of the stories of the few women survivors of those shipwrecks, which tell of their courage and will to survive. Although few in number,

¹ According to Valkhoff (in Rosa & Trigo 1986:32) in 1685 the Jesuit priest Tachard - who was part of a French embassy sent by Louis XIV to the king of Siao and to China - used Portuguese in his dealings with the governor, the high-commissioner van Rheed (...) and other functionaries.

they sometimes survived their male companions, who were killed by exhaustion or fevers. One woman actually chose to die. The agonizing experience of *Dona Leonor de Sepúlveda*, her husband, their children, some women and about 160 men, who were survivors of the *San João*, shipwrecked on the Wild Coast in 1522, tells of a woman who died because of her acute sense of honour and shame. Half-starved and exhausted, the castaways were accosted by some inhabitants who robbed them of all their possessions including their clothes. When this young woman found herself naked, she dug a hole in the ground and buried herself in what became her grave. Her husband, half-demented, ran into the bush, never to be seen again.

The Portuguese were the first to come into contact with the Khoi in the Cape in 1498 and years later they also encountered the Black inhabitants of South East Africa. It also appears that in 1630 the survivors of the *San Gonçalo* were the first Europeans to colonize the area of Mossel Bay. The remnants of this settlement were unearthed some eighteen years ago in Plettenberg Bay near the Robberg nature reserve.

Portugal's golden era did not last long. Soon the seas carried the caravels of its English, Dutch and French competitors, who, like Portugal, became nations attempting to overreach their centre and eventually starting the emigration and navigation centred colonisation. By the 17th century Portugal was depleted of its strength and of its men, but not before much was achieved economically, historically and scientifically, by an empire that extended from Brasil to China. In literature, the epic *Os Lusíadas* portrays the great deeds of the people from that small but far-reaching country which Camões, the book's author, loved so much and for which he fought so hard. The people who

“through seas never sailed before” (Camões 1933:18, translated from Portuguese) opened to the Europeans doors of other worlds’ contributing to the encounter of very different civilizations.

Some of those who settled in southern Africa would have a lasting influence on the country and its people. For instance, a certain Ferreira who converted to Calvinism started a long Afrikaans genealogical tree. In the 17th century, some of his descendants joined the Great Trek and another of his descendants, Captain Ignacio Filipe Ferreira, was a pioneer of the gold mines during the 19th century (Rosa and Trigo 1986:35). The towns Ferreirasdorp and Machadodorp in Mpumalanga (Northern Transvaal) bear witness to the influence of the Portuguese as they refer to the Portuguese surnames Ferreira and Machado. Similarly, Table Bay (*Baia da Mesa*) was named by the Portuguese, as were the names of many other places on the coast. The Wild Coast was baptized *Costa Brava* by the Portuguese, because of the shipwrecks they experienced there.

3. PORTUGUESE IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION IN THE 20TH CENTURY

There are no current statistics available so the actual number of Portuguese in South Africa is unknown. The 1982 census recorded about 80 000 but there was a great mass of illegal immigrants and general consensus has it that there were about 500 000 Portuguese immigrants during the 1980s and early 1990s. This appears to be feasible if the third and fourth generation Portuguese who no longer had any links with Portugal or

the Portuguese community were included (Cravinho 1994:21)². These figures would imply that at that time the Portuguese constituted the third largest white population group in the country, after the Afrikaans and English groups. Present numbers, however, could be much less as many Portuguese people have again emigrated.

The twentieth century history of the Portuguese in South Africa can be divided into four periods, two of immigration and two of emigration. The first period in the 1940's and 1950's was marked by immigrants with a poor level of education, many of whom entered the country illegally. They were mostly resented and disliked by the local populace. The majority of these illegal, uneducated and often impoverished people came from Madeira.³

In the South African Police files, as far back as 1901, we see reports of the illegal entry of Madeirans, some entering through the Cape, others through the port of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) in Mozambique, who would use any means to cross the border into South Africa: in banana trains, underneath train seats and even in shrimp crates, some dying in the process. They were assisted in their adventure by cunning exploiters to whom they would pay substantial amounts. These Madeirans were usually poorly educated peasants and the reason why they sought to enter the country illegally was that

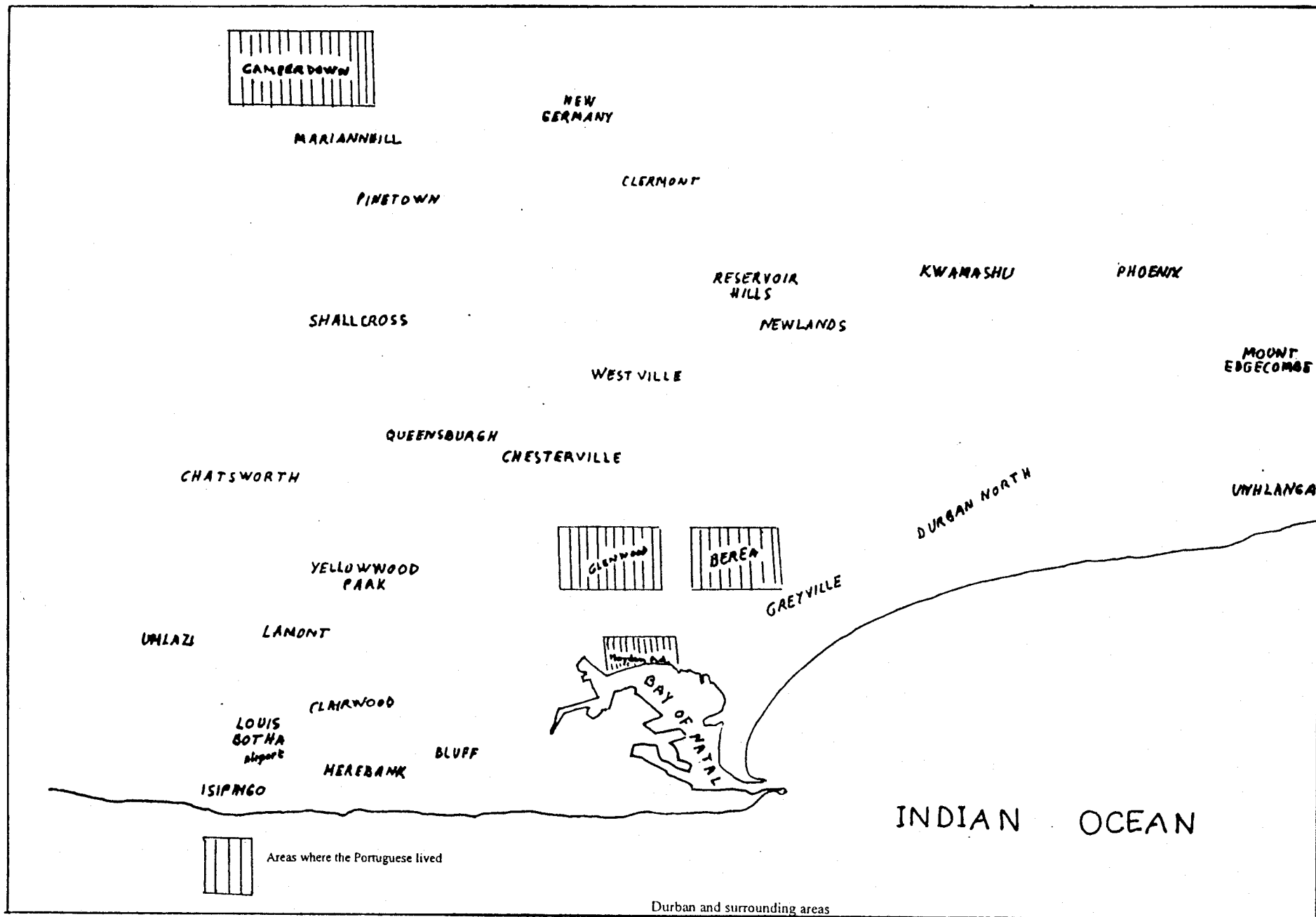
² To be noted that the 500 000 do not include the thousands of Portuguese Africans from Mozambique who would come to the Rand every year, since an agreement signed between South Africa and Portugal in 1896. They would come, either forced or drawn by a dream, after having their economy ruined by the policies of colonisation whilst keeping cultural demands like the paying of "lobolo" for a bride. This agreement apparently carried on after the independence of Mozambique. (Rosa & Trigo 1986:52,64-87).

³ The island of Madeira, as well as, the Canary Islands, were already known in the 13th century and the Portuguese and Spaniards always fought because of them. From the Canaries, slaves were brought to work on the land in Portugal. In Madeira what took place was the colonisation of the island by people from Portugal who developed plantations of corn, vineyards and sugar cane. In 1455 they were already exporting to Portugal and North Africa. Saraiva, J.H. *História Concisa de Portugal*: 137-138.

they did not comply with Section 4 (1) (b) of Act 22 of 1913, which ruled that immigrants had to know how to read and write a European language. These immigrants became market gardeners and fruit-shop or tea-room employees, as well as mechanics and electricians, and many worked in construction, competing with Africans as cheap labour. Many soon became sub-contractors and in the process showed a natural inclination to teach the Africans who worked with them. Through much hard work, determination and frugal living some eventually became proprietors of these businesses. They also took control of the fish-and-chips market, a traditional British food, especially in Cape Town where the big fisheries opened, eventually owning important concerns like the *Lusitânia* enterprise.

The first Portuguese that came to Durban, in KwaZulu-Natal, around 1900 were also from Madeira - many came illegally through Lourenzo Marques as already mentioned. Eventually many worked in the shops of other Madeirans, in the Maydon Wharf, Umbilo area, and usually married Madeiran women - often sent for them from Madeira. In time, some became very successful businessmen, such as Nunes and Fernandes, who had a cane-furniture factory and also sold meat to Africans. In the 1950s there were about half-a-dozen Portuguese families in Durban - the Nunes, Goncalves, Luiz and Fernandes families, who were later joined by the Ribeiro and the Serena families. By then the Portuguese were living in the Berea/Glenwood area. The Ribeiros came from the Johannesburg area where they had a farm, to open a shop in Durban. Others soon followed as Durban was becoming a good area for business. Some of the Madeirans who arrived in South Africa in the 1940s and 1950s were Constantino Rosa, Ornelas and Vieira de Freitas. Later came some Portuguese from Angola and quite a number of

Continental (from Portugal). The latter came to work especially in construction. By that time, some Madeirans had settled in the Camperdown area, between Pietermaritzburg and Durban, and became successful vegetable farmers, like Costa and Farinha. Some descendants of these settlers are now fully integrated into the South African community, and are active in professions such as psychiatry, social work and chemical analysis. In the 1970s the Portuguese from Mozambique also arrived. The community in Durban now comprises South African-born citizens, (mostly third-generation but some could be fourth-generation), second-generation immigrants, and older first-generation immigrants and they are much more widely located.



The second period of immigration of Portuguese into South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s, were decades which saw the arrival, fruitful development and integration of higher educated people and became a golden era for the Portuguese as they became much more appreciated by the host population. This new class of immigrants was pushed into the country during and after the civil war that led to the independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1975. Some were very well educated and quite well-off and many were fluent in English. They felt they had been betrayed by Portugal and forced to come to South Africa, some of them being already the fourth generation of so-called colonialists from their place of birth. They were undergoing a crisis of identity, moving between different cultures and although some would consolidate their Portuguese identity, others, especially the younger generation, would transcend it.

Many of the refugees from Angola and Mozambique had survived very traumatic events and had arrived in South Africa with hardly anything, having to be gathered in refugee camps in Cullinan near Pretoria. There was much anxiety when many were forced by the South African government to return to Angola or Mozambique, or to Portugal where they had nothing. This course of action by the South African authorities surprised many, as this country had various mutual aid agreements with Portugal. It actually caused some protest amongst the South Africans themselves, who felt that the Portuguese were South Africa's allies and if it was not for them South Africa would have had the then called "terrorists" already on its doorstep, and as such those Portuguese deserved all the protection they could get and should be allowed to remain (Out-They-Go Policy Decried. 1975. *Natal Mercury*, 9 July).

Those who stayed, the majority from Mozambique, got jobs and quickly felt quite integrated in their new society for obvious reasons which fits in with Kruger's "radical relativity" theory as their special conditions favoured their integration in the host country, encouraging in some a disintegration and eventual transcendence of their own original Portuguese culture. These immigrants usually had a higher degree of education, professional skills and spirit of initiative than the previous ones (Rosa & Trigo 1986:101). Many of them had studied in South Africa and easily mixed with the local population, having in general a good command of the English language, and they were quickly absorbed in business and industry, often in executive positions. There are indications though that some of their children, now adults, do struggle at times with their double identity. One of them, a young businessman in his thirties, told me:

I don't know who I am. I don't have a country any more, my country
does not exist any longer!

This immigrant from Mozambique came to South Africa in 1976 with his family and a few suitcases, having left behind house, belongings and broken-hearted relatives. When he went to Portugal for the first time eighteen years later in 1994, he felt alienated and disturbed by the poverty and "backwardness" he experienced there.

It is interesting to note that in 1989, Mr. Silva Ramalho, director of the Portuguese newspaper *O Século de Joanesburgo* dismissed some research undertaken by the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC), which suggested that the Portuguese were "dangerous fascist reactionaries", according to a report of a well-known newspaper in Maputo (Mozambique) (Silva Ramalho. 1989. Editorial. *O Século*

de Joanesburgo, 8 May). Well-known are the results of research in the 1970s by Pretorius, by Botha and by Groenwald and Smedley (Rosa & Trigo 1986:104-111). The research by Pretorius showed that Afrikaners would not want to even work with Portuguese, let alone have them as relatives by marriage, and that religion was an important rejective factor (Rosa & Trigo 1986:104,111). This contributed to the alienation of the Portuguese from their host population, but at the same time contributed to their binding together as immigrants, and often enhanced and consolidated their ethnic identity, as explained in the next sub-chapter.

But, in general, after the 1970s and 1980s, the Portuguese community became much more significant and respected by the socio-economic sector of their host country and the “shopkeeper” stereotype began to fade, especially in the Gauteng/Witswatersrand area, which has the greatest density of Portuguese people.

The third period in the twentieth century history of the Portuguese in South Africa started in the early 1990s and is characterised by emigration, mostly to Portugal, but also to other countries, such as England and even Australia. It was a period of turbulence and fear which forced some to emigrate again and which is also characterized by the struggle of some troubled minds trying to adapt to the political changes that were beginning to take place. It must be realized that some of the immigrants were not only very traumatized by their experience of decolonization, but their trauma had also been felt by those already here, bringing about some kind of collective “angst” regarding the repetition of the process of loss of lives and property in this country.

The fourth period, after the 1994 “miracle elections” in South Africa, saw the more optimistic trying again to adapt and integrate, others still trying to maintain their identity and some still wondering whether they should leave the country. This period, from 1994 to now, has been a time of re-adaptation, turbulence and more emigration, especially because of crime and their fear of a drop in the standard of education.

In 1990 there were some “20 000 Portuguese residents in Natal” (Headline: New Portuguese Consul loves what he has seen. 1990. *Natal Mercury*, 4 June). At present it is estimated that there are much less, perhaps between 10 000 and 20 000 but there are no official statistics. Many have left since the change of government in 1994. The majority of the Portuguese residents in KwaZulu-Natal, live in Durban and surrounding areas.

4. THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In order to cope with the conflict between integration and disintegration of identity, as well as the rejection of foreigners by local people, some of these immigrants, who were considered by the host population to be narrow-minded, stubborn and prejudiced, resorted to the support found in their very patriarchal, close-knit families, their religiosity and their social organisations. One has only to use a little imagination to understand how difficult it must have been for these women and men to cope without knowing the language, having to rely on acquaintances or family, sometimes even their own children when they needed a doctor or for any other matter.

Members of the older generation are very loyal to their traditions and cultural traits,

especially regarding language, religious rites of passage and, of course, their particularly tempting cuisine. Some families are proud of being fourth generation Portuguese South Africans. Others, from Mozambique for example, who felt more Mozambican than Portuguese whilst there, now in South Africa have started to appreciate Portuguese customs and music, like the well known *fado* - usually a very fatalistic and nostalgic type of song, typical of Lisbon and Coimbra in Portugal. To my knowledge this has nothing to do with the fate of the newly "decolonised", but perhaps these immigrants identify with the sorrow expressed or the familiarity of the themes. The folk dancing from Portugal and Madeira also serves to reinforce their identity, not forgetting the many Portuguese restaurants where they satisfy their gourmet desires with dishes that delight everybody across the cultural spectrum.

However some Portuguese immigrants no longer speak Portuguese but only English, even in their homes. Their eating habits have also changed to adapt to their new environment and they might not even be in touch with anything Portuguese other than older family members. Some South African Portuguese when they visit Portugal seem to feel alienated, saying that even the mannerisms are different, although things are changing fast in Portugal at present.

change

The way the South African community perceived these immigrants before the late 70s was generally not flattering and we see much controversy in the newspapers about them (Rosa & Trigo 1986:104-111)⁴. Whilst some were disdainful, others praised their

⁴ Where they refer to research by Groenewald (1977), Pretorius (1971) and Botha (1971) showing a certain disparity between what the Government officials would say and what the public at large would say.

honesty, hard work, activity in social care, strong religious convictions and family values. The reporter Aida Parker said: "Portuguese children are amongst the most civilized little people I know." (Parker, Aida. 1968. Mannerly, civilised, determined. *Sunday Tribune*, 14 July), and for the mayor of Bloemfontein, the Portuguese were "an example of unity, prosperity and order, being proud of their nationality" (Rosa & Trigo 1986:109).

The immigrants' tendency to learn English rather than Afrikaans and their strong adherence to Catholicism were some of the impediments to their being accepted by the Afrikaners, themselves staunch Calvinists (Rosa & Trigo 1986:111), who would actually move out when a Portuguese family moved into their neighbourhood (Ibid. 103-111). Their tendency to miscegenation also offended the Afrikaners, although eventually some Portuguese seem to have absorbed the value system of the predominant ruling class, the Afrikaners, with whom they intermarried, especially in the Gauteng area - an interesting development and a change in the alienation/integration process regarding the host population.

These positive and negative reactions came not only from the public but also from government officials. According to a survey by Dr J Pretorius (Brennan. 1972. Those slovenly Portuguese. *Sunday Tribune*, 2 April), the right-wingers, concerned with "purity of race", would accuse the Portuguese of being unable to distinguish between races and even worse of having a flair for miscegenation, being sometimes called the "white kaffirs". To this opinion contributed religious differences and the media, besides political stimulation such as that during the 1970 general election. The British followed

this trend and the same applied to the Indians, Coloureds and Blacks. The Coloureds, Indians and Malays in the Cape detested the Portuguese because only they had the right to operate businesses in the most lucrative parts of town.

4.1 Geographical and Occupational Detail

Regarding geographical distribution, economic activity and occupations, the majority of the Portuguese are concentrated in the Johannesburg area, but they can be found in many areas in South Africa. About 70% live on the Rand, mostly in Johannesburg, there are about 10% in Durban and surroundings, and the rest live in the Cape (Rosa & Trigo 1986:95). In a suburb such as La Rochelle in Johannesburg (also referred to as "little Portugal"), there are beautifully restored houses, as the Portuguese take great pride in their homes. They have created there such a self-supporting community that there are people who do not speak one word of any other language but their own.

In 1989, 60% of the students at the Technical High School in Pretoria were Portuguese (*O Século de Joanesburgo*. 1989. 7 June). It was estimated that there are probably 35% in commerce, 30% in civil construction, 20% in industry - with a small percentage of entrepreneurs - 6% in agriculture, 3% in transports, 3% in liberal professions and 3% with no specific profession (Garcia, José Luis. 1998. *Lusitano*. 27 June).

The great dynamism of the community is shown by the number of enterprises directed or founded by Portuguese. When reading Carlos Bartolo's (1978) *Portugal in the World: Republic of South Africa, South West Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho*, one is quite impressed

with the many economic activities in which the Portuguese have been involved in South Africa, as well as the many industries owned by them. They have formed business concerns at national level in very different economic branches: metallurgy, banking, diamond mining, financial investment, export of iron and coal, fishing, hydro-electric, construction and road works, besides entertainment and food (Rosa & Trigo 1986:98). They have been involved in the recycling of old gold mines, jewellery, ceramics, travel agency and estate agencies. Their engineers and doctors have also contributed to South Africa's development and prosperity.

A number of women are becoming known by their efficiency in all areas, from scientists like Dr Olga Visser, to entrepreneurs, and not to forget the small shopkeepers, often struggling tremendously to survive, like Maria Silva, who saw her husband murdered in their shop. (*Comunidade no Feminino*, 1998. *O Século de Joanesburgo*. Special edition. July). Portuguese women have often been pivotal in upholding their husband's businesses – tea-rooms, grocery shops, restaurants and even as receptionists in doctor's rooms - besides their homes, working hard to make their husbands successful and with little recognition, as already mentioned in the Introduction in chapter 1. Also to be remembered is the self-sacrificing and devout house-executive, often the pillar of strength of the family.

Many of the Portuguese seem to have a certain flippant flamboyancy of character, combined with a sense of communal responsibility, goodwill and spirit of initiative, which are no doubt good ingredients for integration and for participation in community building.

4.2 The Media and Politics

The Portuguese community has various radio stations, a television channel in Portuguese, the *T V Portuguesa* produced by Viriato Barreto's company Telecom Holdings and a small number of newspapers and magazines, like the *O Popular* and the weekly *O Século de Johannesburg*, the predominant one. According to Cravinho (1994:24), this latter newspaper was the one used by the leaders of the community to influence the political opinion of the politically quite ignorant community. In them one sees at various times calls for the Portuguese to unite, but there is no article condemning Apartheid, and so they would perpetuate the status quo.

The albeit short existence of a Portuguese party, the LUSAP (Luso-South-African Party) which participated in the first democratic elections, is also indicative of the dynamism and spirit of responsibility and commitment of the community. LUSAP was a development of the "Democratic Initiative of the Portuguese in South Africa" (DIPSA) an association of young leaders in the Portuguese community, well educated and having more liberal and democratic ideas, founded in the 90s.

There are a few Portuguese involved in the ANC government, like the Lisbon-born, Portuguese-South African economist Maria da Conceição Ramos, director of the Ministry of Finance, who "was always keenly interested in (economics) real-life applications" (Maria Ramos - No Ivory Tower Academic. 1996. *Financial Mail*. 7 June).

The lack of political involvement of this community during the apartheid-era could be attributed to the poor educational level of the majority of these immigrants. When compared with, for example, the Jews, these in general had a greater level of education, and a much greater degree of political awareness. Besides, the Portuguese, like the majority of immigrants, took the stand of accepting the rules of the government that protected them and got on with the business of economical survival. When the government changed they followed the same policy! A well-off businessman told me:

I knew from the start that apartheid could not last. But what was the use of taking a stand as immigrants? We accepted the government of the day then as we do now. And I do not consider the Portuguese particularly racist. Everybody is racist after all. If I go to the Point Road, here in Durban and see those miserable whites that live there, I do not want to socialize with them. I am racist towards those whites. The same happens with the blacks, whose majority is still uneducated and poor. The moment the majority is on the same social level, racism vanishes.

Before the Revolution of April 1974, in Portugal, it should be understood that the Portuguese community had been under the dictatorship of Salazar and Caetano, and had basically no political education. The immigrant community in South Africa was therefore very easily manoeuvred by those who wanted to safeguard their own interests, and for which purpose they were on good terms with the National Party. DIPSA intended to:

facilitate within the Portuguese community, the transition from the old regime to a multi-racial and democratic one (Cravinho 1994:29).

It was their aim to bring political awareness to the community and improve their critical power. Unfortunately, lack of time and personal and political disagreements seem to have curtailed the lifespan of this movement. It was reborn in March 1994, just before the elections, in a new form, as the LUSAP (Luso-South African Party). It had the same aim as DIPSA and also wanted to function as a lobby for issues important to the Portuguese community, one of which was the possibility of including Portuguese as one of the official languages, as they have greater numbers than some of the ethnic groups to be incorporated as official languages (Ibid:35).

LUSAP did not make it to Parliament. Some Portuguese considered that beneficial as they felt that it could bring about conflict in the community and attract too much attention, possibly making small café owners targets for retaliation. Regarding the latter, it is sad to see that even without LUSAP, the rate of shop owners murdered in the Gauteng area in the last two years is really a cause for concern.

4.3 Government Relations

The relations between Portugal and South Africa also move in cycles or “along edges” between “chaos and order”, like any human relationship where common ground or needs are its catalysts.

South Africa has always been involved with Portugal, especially through Mozambique, not only because of the port of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) and the traffic of goods and black labour for the mines, but also, later on, because of the important hydro-electric power station of Cabora-Bassa which also supplies South Africa. Although Portugal has not had racist policies, it is well-known that in many instances those policies were thwarted or ignored and the two governments would of course have agreements of mutual assistance.

After the “Carnations” revolution in April 1974, which toppled the Portuguese dictatorship, the situation changed and the new Prime Minister Mário Soares, a left-wing socialist, was quoted in a report from New York as saying that the “new Portugal” could not support South African race policies. In 1985 a bomb blasted the South African embassy in Lisbon and a Foreign Minister statement in Lisbon asked for the lifting of the state of emergency (*The Daily News*. 1985. 28 July).

After the legalization of the ANC, some of its leaders would also speak positively about the Portuguese, when the occasion would arise and this would be transmitted to Lisbon and all comments less positive would be minimized to present a good image of the “popularity and respectability of the Portuguese community” (Cravinho 1994:14).

If one considers the news there has been quite an activity regarding foreign relations between both countries. In 1995, Mario Soares, then President of Portugal, visited South Africa to let the community know about the excellent relations between Portugal and the “Rainbow Nation” government. He advised the community to integrate themselves

fully in the new political situation, informing them that he had spoken to President Mandela regarding the problem of violence, which in 1995 had brought mourning to 30 Portuguese families.

In June 1996, the then Vice-President, now President Thabo Mbeki, visited Portugal, but in August 1997 the expulsion of the Portuguese Ambassador in Pretoria brought some dark clouds to the relations between the two governments which were fortunately soon cleared up, due to a polite attitude of non-retribution from Portugal (Editorial. *O Século de Johannesburg*. 1997. 11 August). The expulsion came after the erroneous delivery of a letter addressed to Mr. Suharto, President of East-Timor, to the Portuguese Ambassador instead, and the fact that he, Mr. Valente, remitted it to the President of Portugal. Reliable sources indicate that what happened was that in a conversation with the Ambassador, President Mandela had agreed to send him a copy of the letter to be sent to President Suharto. The problem arose because President Suharto never received the original, a mistake made by a secretary in President Mandela's office and not that of the Ambassador.

A year later in August 1998, at the first World Conference of the Ministers responsible for the Youth, in Lisbon, Mr Essop Pahad, assistant to the South-African Social Welfare Ministry, after speaking well of the Portuguese in his country called on young Portuguese to understand that their future is in South Africa, not in Portugal, although for that they do not have to stop being Portuguese (*Lusitano*. 1998, No.481. 15 August:12-13).

The presence of South Africa in the World Expo '98 in Lisbon was one more tie to add to the good relations between both countries. This is the political climate in which these immigrants live, always moving, changing, inviting alienation, integration or transcendence of identity in its varied emotional, intellectual and religious aspects.

4.4 Cultural and Religious Organizations

Besides family, close friends and the church, in order to maintain their identity and their social standards, Portuguese immigrants have created a variety of social, cultural and sports associations. Their variety attests to the differences amongst them, depending on birthplace, profession or education. Indications are that when it comes to the youth, those in Pretoria and Johannesburg are much more aware of the Portuguese culture and quite knowledgeable regarding Portuguese music and singers, which does not happen in Durban where the youth seem to be much more integrated in the main culture. Because there are many more Portuguese in the Gauteng area - attaining high density levels in areas like La Rochelle - the reason could be a number factor. In Pretoria, I was told that there is much more unity amongst Portuguese to the point that there is usually an agreement between the different associations and the church, whereas when one has a function, the others will have none, and as such, the Portuguese flock to that particular place, in this way getting to know each other better. That does not usually happen in Durban.

Some associations, like the Portuguese Welfare Association and the Portuguese Women's League, have branches in various towns. The aim of the latter is to enhance

the image and worth of the Portuguese woman and to bring to awareness the value of their mother-tongue and of the Portuguese culture. This association also awards bursaries to female students.

Cultural Organizations

In Durban in 1961 the *Clube Português do Natal* (Natal Portuguese Club) was founded by Madeirans and Continentals. In 1964 the *Associação Desportiva e Recreativa do Natal* (Natal Sports and Recreation Association) was opened and membership included more Continentals than Madeirans. In 1970 these associations merged to form the *Associação Portuguesa do Natal* (The Portuguese Association of Natal). In 1974 the *Casa Portuguesa do Natal* (Natal Portuguese House), which included Madeirans, Continentals and Mozambicans, opened in Umgeni Road but closed after five years.

At present Durban can be used as an example of the main means of association of the Portuguese, which are: the above mentioned *Associação Portuguesa do Natal*, which has about 200 members; the *Academia do Bacalhau* (The Codfish Academy), a group of 40 to 80 people who get together at a monthly dinner through which they create funds to assist people in need, especially students; and the *Amigos da Caldeirada* (Fish Stew Friends), a similar group. Some of the members belong to both and the funds which are gathered by them are used to assist organisations like the Hospice for the terminally ill. Besides these, there are also: the *Liga da Mulher Portuguesa* (Portuguese Women's League) – which has about 30 women as members; the Church of *San Jose* which caters for a congregation of about 200 Roman Catholics, and the *Associação Portuguesa de*

Beneficência (Portuguese Welfare Society) - which this year increased its membership from 60 to 400. Some of these associations will be discussed further in chapter 5 section 2.2.1.

In Johannesburg and other cities, the same or similar organizations exist, and many more regional associations like the *Casa dos Poveiros* (House of the People from Póvoa); *Casa do Porto* (House of Porto); *Casa da Madeira* (House of Madeira); *Associação dos Velhos Residentes de Mocambique* (Association of the Old Residents of Mozambique) besides associations named after their favourite football team. There are also some cultural organizations like the *Núcleo de Arte e Cultura*. The oldest association is the *Associação da Colónia Portuguesa* which was founded in 1938 in Johannesburg.

Many Portuguese are quite individualistic and they do not join these groups except on special occasions. However that is starting to change as in recent years there seems to be a greater need for some sort of over-reaching association attested by the formation of the *Federação das Associações Portuguesas na África do Sul* (FAPRAS) which has recently activated their II Congress.

Schools

Portuguese schools have existed but usually in poor conditions. In 1998, the only private school that taught Portuguese and Portuguese culture in Johannesburg was the *Colégio Verney*, whose courses are recognized by the Portuguese Minister of Education.

It received little assistance from Portugal, and its teachers were fully paid by the College.

In Durban, according to some teachers and other people with whom I spoke it seems that Portuguese was first taught at homes in the 60s. According to the records in the Portuguese Consulate in Durban, the Portuguese School started functioning in 1970 as *Escola Portuguesa Fernando Pessoa*, named after the well known Portuguese poet who studied in Durban. Around 1972 its name changed to *Escola Portuguesa Dr. Guilherme Durão*, who was the Cònsul of Portugal, and in 1977/78 the name changed to *Escola Portuguesa do Natal* and the school started functioning at Addington Primary School. The Portuguese government did not contribute enough towards its expenses and the parents of the students would help with the finances. In later years the school functioned at Parkview Primary School and much later on at Penzance Primary School. There was also a Portuguese school at the New Germany Primary School. A Portuguese school functioned for a while at Northlands School in Durban North, and now functions at Durban Girls' High and Durban High School (DHS). Portuguese is also taught at Marist Brothers College in Durban since last year. There are negotiations at government level to try to integrate Portuguese into the South African schools - Dr Ruth Viana is the present Teaching Coordinator. The neighbouring countries of Angola and Mozambique, who have Portuguese as the official language, are a good reason for a need to learn the language in South Africa, not only for business reasons but because of the great number of immigrants from those countries presently in this country. Portuguese is integrated at present in seventeen schools in South Africa where the students have the opportunity to choose between Portuguese and Afrikaans for the Matriculation certificate.

Religious Organizations

The Church of *Nossa Senhora de Fátima* (Our Lady of Fatima) in Brentwood Park, in Benoni, Gauteng, has just celebrated its 50th anniversary. It was the first Portuguese church in South Africa in the 20th century. Part of the celebrations was the visit to South Africa of the pilgrim image of the Lady of Fátima, which belongs to the sanctuary in Fátima, Portugal. It is believed that there the Virgin Mary appeared to three young shepherds to ask for prayers and repentance, and a scientifically unexplained solar phenomena occurred, as promised by the Virgin in October 1917. Many Portuguese have great faith in the Lady of Fátima, and attribute many miraculous cures to her intercession.

The funds for that church in Benoni and for the church of St. Anthony in Crown Mines seem to have been raised by its first parish priests from various sources and with the assistance of the Portuguese Government who offered a generous donation to the Archdiocese of Lourenço Marques in Mozambique. Both *Nossa Senhora de Fátima* and St Anthony's Church in Crown Mines belonged to the Archdiocese of Lourenço Marques. St Anthony's was built to cater for the black miners from Mozambique. The South African authorities were very strict, not even allowing black priests to visit the parish during the time of apartheid. Eventually after the take-over in Mozambique, the Archbishop of Lourenço Marques sold it or transferred it to the Archbishop in Johannesburg, as he wanted no property in South Africa.

It appears that Portuguese priests were never very critical in their sermons regarding apartheid as they felt the need to be cautious, not only because they were somehow subsidised by the Portuguese Government but because they knew that the majority of the congregation - especially if they were from Mozambique - was not ready for it as they felt secure under the rule of the National Party. This attitude does not appear to be caused by any racism but simply because of their feeling threatened by what had happened in Mozambique, when they lost all their properties, and some even the lives of relatives. It should be noted that the Portuguese Government never refunded its citizens for their losses in Mozambique and Angola. The *Associação dos Espoliados de Moçambique* (AEMO) (Association of the Plundered of Mozambique) is a group of about 80 000 Portuguese who since 1976 have been fighting for their right to some sort of retribution, and presently intend bringing the case to the appropriate Courts. AEMO is in solidarity with AEANG, which is the same kind of association of Portuguese but from Angola (*O Século de Joanesburgo*, 1998, 30 November).

Although the Portuguese in South Africa are mostly Roman Catholics, some have joined more charismatic or supportive Christian organizations such as the Baptist Church and the Rhema Bible Church, and some have joined the Dutch Reformed Church.

4.4.1 Worship in Durban

The Portuguese Catholics worship at various churches in Durban, depending on their place of residence. The more conservative sector, many of them artisans, prefer to

attend a church where the Sunday Mass is said in Portuguese, like in the church of *San José* in Durban. A minority of Portuguese worship at different Protestant churches.

Regarding the Protestant participants in this research, two joined a Portuguese-speaking congregation of the Durban Christian Centre. Many years ago the Centre had a congregation of perhaps 150 Portuguese, but two years ago it decreased to about seven Portuguese families, most of whom have also emigrated, and now it is down to about twelve Portuguese individuals, besides perhaps 50 black Portuguese-speaking Mozambicans. Two other of our Protestants go to the Harvest Christian Fellowship which gathers at the Glenashley Senior Primary School but they are now finishing building their own church in Somerset Park, which will be called the Harvest Church. They have a congregation of about 250 and it includes only two Portuguese women. Another Protestant goes to a Jehovah's Witnesses' Kingdom Hall at Blackburn Road in Durban North – it has a congregation of about 150 people and includes only about three Portuguese, but I was told that there are quite a few Portuguese at their Durban central congregation.

The church of *San José*, which is at the centre of this research, was the first Catholic church to be built in Durban, originally on the corner of West and Broad Streets. Much later it was transported stone by stone, window, door and plumbing to its new site in Greyville in 1903. In 1904 the new church was ready to serve God and the people again. It was there that a natural material called Port St John's Onyx was used for the first time in Africa, being used for the finely sculptured columns and the wall behind the altar (San José's Church bulletin, 1985:5, on the occasion of the visit of the Portuguese

Archbishop E. Nogueira, of Braga). In 1976 the parish moved to a new building in Florida Road and the church was deconsecrated and put up for sale for four years. In 1980, Archbishop Denis E. Hurley (OMI), offered it to the Portuguese community and in June 1980 it was reopened to the congregation. The Portuguese worked tirelessly to restore the church. The original altar was found in an old mission station by a Mrs. Rosa Rodrigues, President of the Portuguese Catholic Women's League who, together with other Portuguese women from the same League, managed to negotiate its return to its original place.

In Durban, the first immigrants wanted their children to be part of the Portuguese Church so that they could learn in Portuguese. It was sad for them to see, in recent years, the children, who were third-generation Portuguese, learn their catechism in English, with which language they felt more at ease. Having had a Portuguese priest for a few years, the priest now is Irish, although he speaks Portuguese quite well.

SAN JOSE



Some Portuguese are not very religious and they can be very individualistic joining festivities or social gatherings only on special occasions. The more educated or sophisticated often do not go to church, but even that seems to be changing as there seems to be a new movement to search and perhaps return to one's roots. Some Catholics feel that the Roman Catholic Church is losing members to other Christian denominations because of a certain lack of flexibility and warmth which they feel should change. On the other hand, it is interesting to hear some women say that the church had helped them to soften racial barriers.

5. CONCLUSION

The difficult times that Portuguese immigrants now living in South Africa are experiencing, are times of both change and violence, bringing about much tension and tearing families apart. The amount of pressure can perhaps be measured by the number of people who, in the last year, have had terminal illnesses, died, and even committed suicide. All this seems to be a barometer of the state of mind of the community. Some want to leave and some are applying for citizenship. Changes, growth, integration, disintegration - it is all happening again, as this community tries to adapt to a forever changing life situation.

In the following chapters I will analyse in more detail the religious background and experience of the Portuguese women in Durban, the influence on their identity and in relation to the communities in which they exist.

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE, EXPERIENCE AND IDENTITY

In this chapter I will give a brief outline of the Portuguese experience of Roman Catholicism followed by an analysis of the religious practice and experience of the participants in this study. The influence of these experiences on their identities and beliefs will then be explored.

1. THE PORTUGUESE AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The Portuguese have always been quite religious, and in Portugal during the year, there are *festas* in honour of the saints and of the Virgin Mary. Portuguese women are more religious than Portuguese men, and Riegelhaupt (in Wolf 1984:96-112) maintains that there is a long history amongst the Portuguese of non-clericalism and resistance to the authority of the priests. During the reign of *Don José* in the 15th century the Jesuits were expelled from Portugal and their property confiscated, and it appears that even today the Portuguese, especially males, are a bit suspicious of priests and tend to distrust their authority. Recent years have also seen Protestantism taking root amongst the Portuguese in Portugal and elsewhere.

The Roman Catholic Church which is led by the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is one of the longest standing forms of Christianity based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul, and the Holy Scriptures. The doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church include the Apostle's Creed and the seven Holy Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Confession (now called the Sacrament of Reconciliation), Holy Communion, Matrimony, Holy Orders and the Last Rites. Tradition is respected and it involves the veneration of the Saints and of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ proclaimed "Mother of God" (*Theotokos*. Greek: "God bearer") at the council of Ephesus in 431 CE. Roman Catholics believe in the intercessory powers of the Saints. They also believe especially in the intercessory power of the Virgin Mary, considered by some people to be almost equal to Jesus.

The cult¹ of the Virgin Mary amongst the Roman Catholics is part and parcel of their larger set of beliefs - the Trinity, the Sacraments and the intercession of the Saints. In Portugal, the devotion to the Virgin Mary is long standing. She has been the patroness of the Portuguese since the early days of the monarchy in the 12th century. It is traditional in Portugal for women to have *Maria* as their first name in her honour.

There was a particular event that enhanced this cult of the Virgin Mary to a great extent. It was the apparitions of Mary, also called "Our Lady", with a warning and a plan for peace from heaven, in Fátima, a small village in Portugal, during six consecutive months, culminating on the 13th of October 1917 with an astonishing event - the

¹ The term 'cult' is used not in a derogatory way, but as referring to a system of religious worship (cf *Concise Oxford dictionary*. 1984).

“miracle of the sun”² - witnessed by more than 70 000 people (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1975:64).

The village of Fátima has become a symbol of the special bond between the Portuguese and their patroness, and the pilgrimages to Fátima are different from the happy religious *festas* already mentioned. There is a feeling of seriousness and solemnity in the air. Some people bring their sick, hoping for a miracle or a special blessing, while others do some penance to fulfil a promise for the granting of a cure or of another request.

Roman Catholics are under strict obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days and to go to Confession and receive Holy Communion at least once a year at Easter. They should also pray daily, and central in their prayers are the recitation of the Holy Father, the Hail Mary and the Apostle's Creed, also the Rosary in honour of the Virgin Mary. Although the Bible is central to the rituals and readings of the Mass, up to the last decades Roman Catholics have not been particularly fond of reading the Bible themselves, using instead devotional books like the Holy Office, biographies of Saints and the much read *Imitation of Christ*.

There is great emphasis on the importance of the celibate male priesthood who are instrumental at Mass in performing the rites of the consecration of the bread and wine.

There is also great emphasis on sacrifice as being redemptive. Both of these concepts

² Walsh (1954: 145, 147) describes this extraordinary event as follows: “The sun stood forth ... like a great silver disk which though bright as the sun ... they could look straight at it without blinking ... The huge ball now began to dance ... now it was whirling rapidly like a gigantic fire-wheel. After doing this for some time it stopped, then it rotated again with sickening speed ... which flung across the sky blood red streamers of flame reflecting to the earth ... all sorts of brilliant colours in succession ... A fearful cry broke out ... (After) about ten minutes they all saw the sun begin to climb to where it was before... No one could look at it any longer.”

have come under attack by feminists as being detrimental to women. An emphasis on salvation as referring to an “after-life” has also been criticized by feminists, together with liberation theologians (Tatman in *An A to Z of Feminist Theology*, edited by L Isherwood and D McEwan, 1997:212).

2. THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICE OF PORTUGUESE WOMEN IN DURBAN

A conditionalist perspective of religion highlights the fact that people are usually not just “religious” or “not religious”, but experience degrees of religiosity throughout their lives. Religion can thus be seen as a continuous life experience and not just as a set of doctrines. To establish the variety in the religious practice and experience of Portuguese women in Durban, this chapter will analyse their religious affiliation and ethnic identity; church attendance; prayer habits; perceived problems with their church and opinions about controversial church teachings and attitude towards other faiths. There will be no attempt to judge the depth of religiosity of the participants.

2.1 Religious Affiliation and Ethnic Identity

Six of the eleven Roman Catholics in this study attend the Portuguese Church of *San José*, three attend a South African Catholic church, and two do not attend church at all. Of the six who attend *San José*, three alternate with visits to the South African Catholic Church. Two of the three who attend the South African Roman Catholic Church, do so only sporadically. Of the two who do not practise, one considers herself an agnostic (but

added that if she should return to the faith, it will be to the Catholic church), while the other has a syncretic type of personal religion, based on Catholicism but with elements of eastern religions.

Of the five Protestant participants, two worship at the Harvest Fellowship Church and two belong to the Portuguese-speaking congregation of the Durban Christian Centre (both non-denominational churches) but the younger of these two women also goes to the South African congregation on Sunday evenings as there she can mix with younger people and they come to her place for Bible study and braais, which does not happen with the Portuguese of the Portuguese-speaking congregation. The reason why she still goes there is because she sings in their band and her boy-friend plays some instrument.³ The fifth Protestant is a Jehovah's Witness and attends services at a Kingdom Hall (See chapter 2 section 4.4.1).

The attendance patterns of the participants reflect the diffuse religious allegiance of the Portuguese women in Durban, which can depend on place of residence or the time of Mass, besides other reasons.⁴ About half of the participants do not appear to need to maintain their ethnic identity through participation in the Portuguese church. However, for some participants, it seems that attending Mass at *San José* is a means of showing who they are against the background of the larger community. They take pride in their ethnic affiliation and bond with the Portuguese community in the traditional religious

³ They got married recently.

⁴ As I was finishing this research I found out that at least two of the participants no longer attend Mass at the Portuguese church of *San José* but at South African Catholic Churches. For one the reason is the hour of the Mass for the other the fact that she has moved to a place far away. This corroborates my observation about the diffuse allegiance of these parishioners.

manner. At *San José* the parishioners take their children to Catechism and some of the children participate in folk dancing, as well as socials and small processions. Children are in this way familiarised with the Portuguese language and traditions (see chapter 2 section 4.4.1). But this is now changing. In recent years there were about a dozen children learning Catechism and not one hundred and thirty like thirteen years ago⁵.

The findings of this research might not be representative of the whole of Durban's Portuguese women, but are an indication of a certain disintegration of traditional beliefs and practices and of integration into different religious groups and the host society. So religion can play a role of integration into one's community (the Portuguese one), but can also play a role in transcending one's community and becoming involved in the larger community, in this case the English-speaking South African community.

2.2 Church Attendance

Ten participants, which include the five Protestants, attend church regularly. Four Roman Catholics attend only sporadically, and two do not attend at all. The latter say that they are still Catholics because they were raised in the tradition, and even the agnostic one says that if she did go to church it would be the Catholic Church.

Six Roman Catholic participants receive Holy Communion on a regular basis, five go to

⁵ In 1999 on the completion of the First Communion and Confirmation the teacher who had served for 17 years asked to be relieved of the post and Catechism lessons have not been resumed since then. It seems that no-one has come forward and that the children now go to lessons at South African churches. This ties up with what I see as a recent drive here in the Roman Catholic Church to have parishioners join their **local parishes rather than the ones they might prefer**. It also ties up with the apparent tendency of the third generation to integrate into the larger community.

Confession regularly, six attend Mass regularly, but two attend Mass only a couple of times a year. Therefore, despite the prescriptions of the Church, less than half of the eleven Roman Catholic participants attend Mass and partake of the Sacraments on a regular basis.

2.3 Prayer Habits

Eleven of the sixteen participants said that they pray daily. Two Catholics never pray and three pray irregularly. Of the latter group, one said that she prays when she is afraid or in trouble, but also in thanksgiving. Six of the Roman Catholics pray to the Virgin Mary and three profess to “like her”, although they do not pray to her. Four Catholic participants said that they sometimes pray the Rosary and one mentioned that she prays the Rosary daily. It is notable that those who attend Mass regularly and who are devoted to Mary are all first-generation immigrants, and therefore older people, while those who claim to “like” the Virgin but do not pray to her, are all second-generation. The low-key approach of the Church regarding devotion to Mary since Vatican II might be the reason for the younger generation’s detachment towards this practice. In contrast to the practice in Portugal and France in the South African churches I have attended, the priests seldom mention the Virgin or her apparitions from the pulpit. Therefore the younger generation has usually had less exposure to this cult.

At present there is no Bible study at the Portuguese Catholic church and in the past it existed only for a short while. The exposure to the Bible is mostly as mediated in the Mass or in the Rosary meditations, although half of the Catholics mentioned that they

read the Bible in private. Some women only want to belong to a Bible study group if it is led by a priest, as they believe that only he has enough studies to guide them regarding interpretation. This indicates an unquestioning acceptance of the authority of the male priesthood, besides ignorance or rejection of feminists' opinion that the Bible needs to be reinterpreted from a feminine perspective. But some women do believe strongly that the Spirit can guide and inspire them and these could eventually become more independent and critical and open to the concept of "women-church" (see chapter 1 section 4). Women are the majority in the congregations and their opinions and criticism should make a difference and force the male priesthood to reconsider some of their doctrines and structures.

There is a small group who pray the rosary in honour of the Virgin Mary weekly at the church of *San José*, which one of the participants attends, and at least one participant also goes to a Rosary group at a South African church. The Rosary entails meditations on the life of Jesus Christ and special requests after praying each of the five decades of *Hail Marys*, followed by a *Glory* and an *Our Father*. The *Hail Mary* includes a request to Mary to intercede for sinners after the salutation: "Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you. Blessed are you amongst women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus".

Eight of the eleven participants mentioned that they used the prayers set by the church, be they litanies or prayers, such as the *Our Father* or *Hail Mary*. These eight participants were also among the fourteen who said "just talking to God" was a form of prayer. While the Protestants do not use set prayers, they were part of the thirteen

participants who said that they read the Bible and devotional books on a regular basis. Fourteen participants declared that they pray both at home and in church.

The Protestant participants reported that they have prayer meetings two or three times a week, while the devout Catholics have prayer meetings mostly on a monthly basis.

2.4 Perceived Problems with their Church and Opinions About Controversial Church Teachings

In this area, amongst the Catholics the issues were: disagreement with preaching politics from the pulpit; the mandatory celibacy of priests; authoritarianism of the clergy; the inflexibility of the Pope on matters such as contraception, abortion and divorce; the hypocrisy in the church amongst the hierarchy and in the congregation; insistence on confession and on the use of indulgences, as well as lack of community-building. Among the Protestants, the issues mentioned were fanaticism of some church members and their criticism of others. The Jehovah's Witness indicated that it is a burden to belong to her church; because through ignorance, people in general did not like the group. On the issue of contraception, the Catholic participants unanimously agreed with the use of contraceptives regardless of the teachings of the Catholic Church. They did not see anything wrong with that and felt that it was not right to have children if one could not look after them properly and give them the necessary education. One participant said that things are different now from what they were in old times, people have to be able to get an education to survive. Another dismissed the issue with the statement:

the Pope is not married and does not have a family, he cannot understand certain things.

As to abortion, eleven women, including the five Protestants, condemned it, four said that it depended on circumstances and one was in favour of abortion on demand. One of the participants, referring to her parents, had said in an initial interview that her father did not want many children because he knew what it meant to be poor and her mother, although a very religious woman had submitted to various abortions. She added that:

it was quite a normal thing to do in those days. People only knew about it when the woman died, like it happened with a cousin of mine.

This indicates that what the Pope says and what Catholics do can be very different. Reality forces people to do what they feel is best, often without much concern for what their religious leader teaches, but still keeping a certain secrecy about their choices for fear of having fingers pointed at them.

On the celibacy of priests, four Catholics agreed that it was necessary and seven disagreed. Of the first group, one told me that priests and nuns give themselves completely to serving others and they cannot have the burden of a family. She also mentioned that Jesus had told married men, like Peter, to leave everything and follow Him. Other participants felt that priests are men and needed to have wives and their own family, thinking that it is because of celibacy that we are seeing so many cases of child abuse. Another participant remarked "they father children anyway". Overall, these

results indicate a break with conservative church teachings, probably due to a greater awareness of weaknesses amongst priests.

Regarding women as priests, five Catholics would welcome such a change, two were doubtful, and two were against the idea. One participant was of the opinion that Jesus had not chosen women as disciples and that women have “handicaps because of their physiology”. On the other hand, another much younger respondent was of the opposite opinion and did not agree that women have physiological impediments. But the fact that nearly half of the Catholics favoured women as priests is an indication of a movement away from traditional thinking amongst a number of these participants.

The Protestants were not in favour of women pastors. One participant said that in the Protestant church the ideal is the couple, the pastor and his wife, and that the wife had an important supportive role to play and might even be required to preach. She believed that it would be “too great a burden” for a woman to be a pastor. It seems that none of these women consider the possibility of changing the structures of the churches to accommodate women as pastors.

Two participants who did not have any criticism against their churches, one Catholic and one Protestant, have a few characteristics in common, namely a low educational level, a tendency to inner experiences and a poor command of the English language. Whether these observations indicate a correlation between low education and submissiveness to religious authority cannot be established in this study.

2.5 Attitude Towards Other Faiths

I noticed that when I asked about other religions, the participants spoke about other Christian denominations, and only when I specifically mentioned Muslims and Hindus, would they bring them into consideration.

When I asked respondents what they thought about other faiths, their responses ranged in general from having a tolerant or indifferent attitude, to fearful when considering the Muslim faith, or dislike regarding Jehovah's Witnesses. There was the opinion that Christianity was the true religion but through other religions people could be led to God as well. One Protestant, though, quoted the Bible and said that:

Only through Jesus can one be saved.

When I asked her whether other people would not go to heaven, she replied that she did not know. Four showed a total lack of interest in other faiths.

Overall the participants seemed willing to accept other denominations and religions but doubted the truthfulness of their beliefs and worthiness of their practices when it comes to other non-Christian religions. Some participants when referring to eastern religions referred to them as possibly inspired by the devil and accused them of idolatry. One participant, in what appears to be a case of xenophobia, exhibited fear towards Muslims but could not say why she was afraid of them. There was also an indication of rejection towards Jehovah's Witnesses caused by an aversion to their persistence in trying to convert others.

Considering the high incidence of Indians in Durban, it was notable that no one mentioned Hindus unless I asked. This could be due to some stereotyping, as the participants usually considered them to be pagans, the same applying to African religions. It was interesting to see the change in a participant's attitude towards Indians after hearing the Pope speak quite highly of them, commenting on the ardour of their devotion to the divine. This person became more accepting of them although she seemed a bit confused to me, as her mannerism - a shrugging of shoulders indicated to me a certain unbelief or doubt.

3. RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND IDENTITY

In order to study the relationship between the participants' sense of identity and their religious experience, the following areas were analysed: personal identity and religion; extraordinary or meaningful experiences and transcendence. Special attention was given to experiences of conversion to Protestantism.

3.1 Personal Identity and Religion

Most participants maintained that their religious belief helped them to find meaning in life, i.e. to have a reason for living and to have a sense of self-worth. One said:

I am a Christian, a child of God, who is on earth for a purpose, to carry out a mission.

They felt that their faith gives them a sense of direction, being the basis of their values, their sense of what is right and what is wrong, and as such, it influences their decisions in all spheres of life. It also influences their self-image, as they believe they are children of a loving Father who cares for them, and this gives them a sense of security. It furthermore influences their marital relationships and their morals, as they look to the Bible for ethical prescriptions.

Not all participants showed similar aspects of their characters as influenced by religion. Regarding decision-making, for example, one said that religion had no bearing on it but added that it had an influence on her behaviour towards others - which would surely also influence her decision making. It was interesting to note that in regard to sexuality, most respondents did not think that religion influenced their sexual attitudes, considering it rather regulated by their culture and the influence of their mothers and families. But one did say that there were all sorts of prohibitions regarding sexual behaviour:

So much so that even when married we still think that it is a sin ...

Others said that their religious beliefs had contributed to a certain modesty in manner and dressing and, as such, had an influence on their sexual behaviour. One participant showed her satisfaction with the new openness in the church regarding sexuality, which is apparent in the courses for the youth, especially before Confirmation, and through pre-marital courses and "marriage encounter" courses.

People often lack awareness of the influences of religion on culture and of how much they are sub-products of a very patriarchal religion.

Apart from the agnostic, for whom the family gives meaning to her life: “something to live for”, all respondents felt that their faith contributes to their inner strength and to giving their lives a sense of direction and a sense of self-worth.

For one of the participants her identity is based in Catholicism (through the influence of her mother) and eastern religious beliefs. She adds that between her religion and herself there is a “dialectical relationship” and she “follows her intuition” in ethical matters and in matters of faith. This case indicates an awareness of how her identity is constructed through a bipolar conditioning between her inner self and her outer self, the latter referring to the side of her that extends towards new horizons, judges them and internalizes them or not.

The above observations indicate that religion exerts some influence on the women, although there is also a movement away from religious constraints, when the participant chooses behaviour that feels right, regardless of the teachings of the church.⁶

⁶ Of course, one has to be careful of one's intuition and feelings of right and wrong, as in the case of the last participant who follows her “intuition”, which reminds me of Bruteau, an American feminist theologian (in Edwards 1995:190) who differentiates between intuitive feelings based on gut feelings which for some people today is their undoubted way of choosing what is right and wrong, and intuitive insight, based on a higher awareness of the interconnectedness between people and a caring attitude. In other words, only when one's intuition is free from unconscious selfishness can it be good and acceptable.

3.2 Extraordinary and Meaningful Experiences

I tried to establish what had been important in the participants' lives - what had been meaningful to them and how they had experienced the role of religion and/or community in the process and how it had impacted on their identity. I tried not to guide them, but if they asked me, I would suggest they talk about what had been meaningful in their lives, good or bad, what had had an impact on who they are, or what had been, for some reason, something they would always remember, it could be an event or a person, and this regardless of whether or not it had anything to do with religion - at least in an obvious manner.

Half of the participants reported special experiences, which included, among others, experiences of possession, visions and special dreams.

3.2.1 Possession, Visions, Dreams and Near Death Experiences

Two participants, one Protestant and one Catholic, reported experiences of possession or the presence of evil. Six Catholics mentioned special visions and significant dreams, and two (a Protestant and a Catholic) related near-death experiences.

In two cases, despite their ordeal of feeling, in one case, as if being “possessed by something evil”, and in the other case, as if being confronted by an evil presence, (“which was looking at me”), both women ultimately evaluated their experiences positively. They felt, that by having faced these forces and overcoming them, they had

grown stronger, increased their self-confidence and consolidated their identities. In both cases it was their faith that had sustained them through the harrowing experiences.

Regarding visions and special dreams, one participant, when still a child and before her first Holy Communion, had a vision of the Virgin Mary who was looking at her. To this day, this social worker finds it comforting to just sit and look at an image of the Virgin which she has in her room. Another participant, when she was a teenager woke up one night to see a vision of an old lady sitting at the bottom of her bed. She felt scared, but after a while the vision dissolved into a white cloud and disappeared. The following night she prayed that she could identify the old lady. She then had a dream in which the old lady again appeared, and she asked her who she was. The old lady gave her name, said that she was her guardian angel, and asked her if she wanted to see heaven. She then took her to heaven and she can only remember feeling an extraordinary peace. When they returned the angel told her that she would only see her again before she died. That experience gave her comfort, she felt that she “could not be that bad” if she had been granted such favour and it gave her an assurance of life after death besides the belief that heaven was a state of great peace for the spirit.

Another interviewee, when already an adult, prayed to see Jesus and she had a powerful vision of Jesus which filled her with joy and comfort.

As to dreams, in two cases they contributed to some confirmation of their identities and beliefs. In one case the participant only remembers as a child dreaming that Mary and Jesus were telling her “to always be good”, which she agreed might have had an effect

on her moral consciousness, seeing that she still remembers it. The other participant had dreams where Jesus and Mary spoke to her and she feels comforted by that memory and very privileged. Because of that experience she feels an "added responsibility to be a good and fruitful Christian, feeling obliged to help others". In another case, after an operation, one woman, saw "as if in a dream" her deceased grandmother who was carrying her away in a boat. Afterwards she was surprised to discover that she knew the biography of some saint which she had never known previously. It appears that there must have been some expansion of consciousness caused by her experience.

Two Catholics told of their near-death experiences. One participant, when pregnant and having been in a car accident, had a vision of "what looked like the Virgin Mary" and also one of her deceased father. The father predicted that she would not abort and that in her lifetime she would have two children, a girl and a boy, which came true. In the other case, the participant "died" when she was three years old and was brought back to life after hours of prayers and singing by her father's prayer group. Smiling, she told me:

I must be needed here on earth to have come back.

These experiences have contributed to a sense of self-worth and have given both participants comfort and a reason for living.

Other experiences mentioned were awareness of "a power in one's life, a protecting force". Also, feelings of warmth and peace after prayer, or of strength after prayer, which enabled the participant to work with extraordinary vitality, even when feeling ill and very weak. There was also the experience of special readings of the Bible, read

alone or heard at Mass, which influenced a decision, as they seemed to be the response to prayer. One participant mentioned an experience of levitation. She said that having heard that an aunt very dear to her was near death, she knelt to pray in earnest. Suddenly she started feeling very light and realized that her knees were rising up from the floor. She felt fear, and was returned to the ground.

Generally all these experiences point to a connection between inner life, religious beliefs and action. They boost self-confidence, give a sense of awe, and of encouragement. It is notable that most of the extraordinary experiences were mentioned by Catholics. These participants do not seem to take much of a critical attitude to their experiences but rather appear to have a childlike acceptance of them. More than one remarked: "I don't know what it means", but also that the experience had definitely had an important effect on their lives, and had given them peace and hope.

3.3 Change, Growth and Transcendence

The participants included six women who had transcended the religion of their childhood and either moved into a different form of worship or renounced their faith.

Of these six participants, four were Catholics who became Protestants, and the other two were a Charismatic Catholic and an agnostic.

3.3.1 Conversion to Protestantism

Four of the participants converted to Protestantism out of dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic tradition. One is an older woman, while the other three are second-generation immigrants. They all had experiences which sparked identity crises and eventually led to their decision to leave the Catholic Church. They all remarked that they abhorred the ritualism and rigidity in the Catholic tradition and also, according to two of them, its superficiality, and lack of spirituality or trivialisation of rituals. The complex Catholic theology was another of the negatives, as well as the aggressiveness of some of its members. At the Pentecostal churches they were invited to, and in one case a Jehovah's Witness church, they found warmth, a sense of belonging, a supportive social network, and a simpler theology. These aspects of an environment - which for them was more natural and spiritual - helped to consolidate their identity, and made them more secure about who they were (including their "South Africanness") and what they wanted.

One participant who had an aggressive father had developed suicidal tendencies which subsided once she joined the Pentecostal church. Her conversion to Pentecostalism and a belief in being loved by God gave her a renewed inner security, a new identity as a child of God and a feeling of being protected. She overcame her own self-hate which had been caused by her being taken away from her parents to be raised by an aunt because of the parents' marriage difficulties. It was only after she "gave herself to the Lord", that she changed completely. So, in this case, religion caused a decentralising of her identity, from herself to a new centre, which was mainly Jesus, His love and His

will for her. She relinquished the traditional religion of her parents and accepted a new faith, which consolidated her new identity. There is, in this case, both a rejection of religion because of experience (her father's example) and the embracing of a new form of Christianity which brought her new equilibrium.

The case of conversion to Jehovah's Witness is another instance of the renunciation of religious beliefs because they do not fit into one's feelings about life and after-life. The teachings about Hell did not meet the participant's own beliefs. There was a need for her to look further to find a system that would suit her psychological and social needs.

All these participants abandoned their culturally bound religion and found a new form of worship with which they feel more comfortable, which ties up with their sense of identity, and is meaningful in their way of worshipping. In the case of three of them, it influenced their integration into the South African community as a whole, away from the solely Portuguese community. One of them is still involved with a Portuguese-speaking congregation, within a South African church, but she has moved away from the larger Portuguese community in Durban.

3.3.2 Other Forms of Disintegration and Transcendence

Similar to the foregoing cases was the experience of the participant who, following a crisis of separation from her extended family and her consequent involvement with a Catholic charismatic group, experienced a strong deepening of her religious commitment and she:

stopped being a Sunday Catholic.

She became much less materialistic, having a feeling that she had been “chosen by God” to work for Him. “It was then that my life bloomed”, she said. Her meeting with Mother Teresa on the occasion of her visit to Durban was also very meaningful and the famous nun’s example of humility and total dedication had a profound impact on her. She became active in helping the poor and the Missionaries of Charity after that.

Another case involves the relationship between politics and religion and its effects on identity and religious beliefs. In the case of this participant, the take-over in Mozambique triggered an ethnic identity crisis. Before the political change this woman considered herself more Mozambican than Portuguese but afterwards she felt “just Portuguese”. The Catholic Church’s stand in favour of the so-called terrorists, who were posing a threat to the wellbeing of her family and to her identity as Mozambican, forced her to abandon her allegiance to her church so she could keep a sense of integrity and her personal and ethnic identity. The attitude of the church intensified her crisis, forced her to question her religious beliefs and she stopped attending church services.

To be noted is the fact that the white Mozambicans (or rather, the Portuguese from Mozambique), were not particularly fond of Portugal, and felt exploited by their motherland. After the revolution in Portugal and the take-over in Mozambique, they were obliged to choose whether to be Portuguese or Mozambican. Being fearsome, many chose to remain Portuguese and eventually left the country, especially after listening to President Samora Machel’s heated speeches against the “colonialists”, and

witnessing actions like the closing of the college *Irmãos Maristas* (Marist Brothers) - the brothers were given only three days notice to leave. These Mozambicans felt alienated, without a country and threatened in their identity and economic survival, so, the majority emigrated and opted for "feeling" Portuguese.

Although later on, the previously mentioned participant resumed attendance at church to set an example to her children, thinking that one:

has to identify with a religion,

she still feels some conflict and is unhappy with some of the Pope's actions, such as not coming to visit the Catholics in South Africa because of "apartheid", but going to visit those in Mozambique. In her opinion religion is about spirituality and not politics. "We have enough of that in the news", my interviewee said.

The above is in stark contrast to Christian feminists'⁷ interpretation of the gospels' message, which encourages a perspective of liberation not only of women but of all the oppressed, for which end Radford Ruether in her book *Women-church* even suggests liturgies which can powerfully conscientize the assembly regarding, for example, the "sins against the poor" (Ruether 1985:249). That celebration includes the reading of an open letter from Latin American Churchmen to North American Christians and before

⁷ A better term would be the more modern word "womanist" instead of "feminist" because of the connotations of "feminist" with radical feminism and its hatred of men and advocacy of radical separatism as the only solution to end patriarchy - which goes together with the idea that men are incapable of "authentic" humanhood (Ruether:1985:60). But for consistency I will keep using the term "feminist".

the final benediction it ends with each person anointing the forehead of the other person with ashes and saying:

The old world of inhumanity collapses into ashes. Out of the ashes let a new humanity arise like a phoenix within each of us.

These celebrations should be followed by some sort of praxis, a practical communal attempt to improve the situation that has been brought to the fore.

It appears that the previously mentioned participant feels the need to go to church to escape the realities of everyday life and to be transported to a world of peace and hope, but without much thought about how to try and attain that peace in a practical and social manner.

Like the experience of any of the other participants, her experience has been a constant seesawing between religious beliefs, social problems, what she needs to believe in and what gives her meaning and equilibrium, in a construction of identity always in flux, subject to the interaction among different cultures - Portuguese, South African, Mozambican, and her husband's and her religion. As an end result she has continued consolidating her ethnic identity as Portuguese and decided to remain Catholic, but in a more independent manner, maintaining her faith as an aspect of her "conditioned" identity.

Another case of transcendence, or of moving away into perhaps some sort of limbo, is the experience of the Catholic participant who purports to be an agnostic. In this case,

her integrity and her sense of right and wrong clashed with her experience of institutionalized religion, causing her to relinquish her faith so as to maintain her own individual centre. This can be considered a type of transcendence of religion in order to maintain her individual identity and social awareness and observations. However, the participant feels that if she reverted to religion, she would be a Catholic, which indicates the strong influence that her early education and ethnic culture has had on her sense of identity.

3.3.3 Secular Alternatives to Religion

Two young participants, having started to question their Catholic faith, stopped going to church, and eventually started moving “along the edges” of other beliefs. One, an emigrant from Mozambique, went on to study Fine Arts, which confirmed her feelings about the dictatorial attitude of the Catholic Church and its dogmatism, and made her aware of its influence in the oppression of women. It was some kind of release of her doubts, as during her studies she found women who thought, one way or another, like her. Years later, she decided to return to practising her faith, but not in a Catholic church. She joined a Pentecostal group. In the meantime, Art was one means by which she could heal herself and release her emotions. It helped her to work through the religio-cultural conflicts created by the impinging of her Portuguese culture into her South African experience, which also included portrayals of the Virgin having sensual connotations and, as such, seen not as an ethereal being but as a real woman, the result of her studies in feminism. Through Art, she achieved a certain inner peace, a function religion also serves.

The other young woman, born in South Africa, went on to study environmental geography and town planning, and her life is now moulded on a personal religion which is somewhat syncretic and includes elements of eastern religions. For this participant it is mainly her academic activities, not her religion, that bring her joy and meaning in life. This shows a need for her to satisfy her sense of integrity through movement away from the original or traditional religion and, through the absorption of esoteric elements, from Hinduism. She has some similarities to a New Ager (Steyn 1994:302-310). She loathes institutionalized religion and tries to live her life according to her intuition of what is right and wrong in an optimistic manner, believing in the spiritual world but not overly concerned about it, realistically trying to chart her life through her academic interests, in a "dialectic relationship" between her experiences and her faith.

3.9

4. CONCLUSION

It is clear that church attendance patterns of the participants reflect the diffuse allegiance of the Portuguese women in Durban. Some worship at the church of *San José* as a means of strengthening their ethnic identity, while others have joined new groups which have strengthened their bonds with the host society.

On the issues of church attendance, prayer habits, Bible reading and prayer meetings, in comparison to Catholics the Protestants were overall the more faithful in their practice.

Regarding devotion to the Virgin Mary amongst Catholics, only the first-generation immigrants pray to Mary, the younger ones just "like her". This could perhaps be a result of less emphasis from the pulpit, since Vatican II, on the cult of the Virgin Mary.

On the issue of problems with the church and opinions about controversial church teachings there was a substantial amount of disagreement with church teachings amongst the Catholic women. Amongst the Protestants their criticism was directed more towards the congregation, in relation to gossip and the perceived fanaticism of some members.

Overall, the results indicate a break with conservative church teachings amongst Catholic women. The Protestants do not seem to envisage the possibility of changing the church structure to accommodate women pastors. But the majority of Catholics seem to have had an inconsequential religious education relative to personal and social problems - sexuality, marriage, gender, justice, etc. - when compared to Protestants. From this research it appears that the Protestants are more self-confident and knowledgeable about some of these issues as they have more prayer meetings and discussions to sort out practical issues, using the Bible as guideline. Overall these women, who are part of the new democratic South Africa, are only now being confronted by issues like gender, homosexuality and racial and social problems, especially through television. In this study there was an apparent correlation between poor education and an uncritical attitude towards the church. Whether this is indicative of a correlation between poor education and submissiveness to religious authority cannot be established in this study.

When it comes to attitudes towards other faiths, in general there was a tolerant or indifferent attitude towards other faiths, whilst some voiced a dislike of Jehovah's Witnesses and a fear of Muslims. There is a high incidence of Indians in Durban, but it

was notable that no one mentioned Hindus unless I asked. This research indicates that there seemed to be a lot of ignorance among some of the respondents, especially Catholics about their own faith, let alone other faiths.

Special experiences were cited by some participants, which included amongst others, possession, visions and special dreams. Those experiences indicate a connection between inner life, religious beliefs and action. They boost self-confidence and are a means of identity consolidation. The participants, the majority being Catholics, do not seem to take any critical attitude towards their experiences.

In the field of their religious experience and identity this research indicates that religion can be a consolidator of identity, but sometimes their identity and their sense of integrity interferes with their religion and they transcend it.

Regarding conversion to Protestantism it should be noted that, with the exception of the Jehovah's Witness, those women who were previously Catholic, have joined Pentecostal or Charismatic type of churches. The attraction towards Pentecostal or Charismatic groups because of their spontaneity and more social orientation highlights the social aspect of religion as a means for community building.

Because dissatisfaction with the Catholic church's dogmatism and rigidity is one of the reasons established in this research for conversion to Protestantism, and because women are the majority of the faithful, their needs, opinions and criticism should eventually

make a difference and influence the male priesthood to reconsider their paradigms, doctrines and structures, challenging them to adapt and change.⁸

All of the above are examples of conditionalism or “radical relativity”, showing the great disparity of experiences and of personal choices in reaction to social experience.

As Pinto (1998:6) says:

Contemporary conceptions of identity are ... no longer associated with essentialist notions of stability and homogeneity.

On the contrary, chaos and change, alternating with order, are the fields where identity moves and tries to find its ground.

⁸ Unfortunately it can also lead to a priesthood that feels threatened to become even more rigid and dogmatic.

CHAPTER FOUR

FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND GENDER

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will report on the understanding of the participants' awareness of gender and gender relations, as it becomes apparent in the closeness of family ties, the type of marital relationship, the women's feelings about their situation in relation to men, and their opinions on gender differences. The influence of religion on their identity and self-image as women will be explored.

The participants in this study have all been educated in a very patriarchal social system, which places great emphasis on the family unit and respect for the authority of the father. The mother is generally the bonding factor, the one who comforts and makes sacrifices for the wellbeing of the family at the expense of her own self-realization. The father, on the other hand, is the provider, the head of the family, the one who has the last say, and who cares for the family but more in a financial capacity. In this project I tried to establish whether this pattern is maintained or is changing.

Before dealing with the results of this research in the area of family, marriage and gender and in order to bring more light to the issues at stake, I will give a summary of

the political background of women in Portugal including an outline of the history of Portuguese feminism, followed by an outline of the controversial influence of the Bible on women's lives.

1.1 The Political Background of the Situation of Women in Portugal in Relation to Men

According to the scholar Darlene J. Stadler (1989), the history of the repressive legislation against women in Portugal goes back to the 1500s, when the law, planned to curtail women's human rights, allowed the husbands to beat their wives and children, and men could kill their wives or daughters in cases of adultery. In 1867 the Civil Code improved their situation slightly but there was not much change and the husband could force the wife back to the household if she left him. In 1820 Dr. Borges Barros was the first of a group of men who voiced their concern for women's rights, which included suffrage for women and the right for secondary and university education. In 1868 appeared the first magazine edited by women only, the *A Voz Feminina* (Woman's Voice) which called for equality between men and women. Only in the 1890s women's voices became dominant in the struggle for women's rights. The early history of Feminism in Portugal¹ was similar to that of its counterpart in Europe but only in the late 1960s - at the time Caetano was substituting for a sick Salazar - were women given the right to vote if literate. In German and England it happened around 1918. The

¹ Some well-known feminists were Carolina Michaelis de Vasconcelos, Ana de Castro Osorio who wrote the first feminist manifesto *As Mulheres Portuguesas* (To the Portuguese Women), Maria Lamas who had the courage to protest against Salazar, and in the early 1970s Isabel do Carmo the only Portuguese woman to form and lead a political party, the "Revolutionary Proletariat Party".

dictatorial regime of Salazar was particularly fierce in denying women's rights and separate education was decreed so that girls could learn household chores and childcare. In 1931 he granted women with secondary education the right to vote - a major event - but in 1946 married women were denied the right to vote. In 1960 a strong contingent of men left the country for various reasons and women moved to take their places. Many became doctors, lawyers or engineers, professions which were still the domain of males in America and England, although in 1981 some 23% of women were still illiterate. Women were quite involved in the aftermath of the overthrow of the regime by the military in 1974, especially those of the working classes. In 1976 the Constitution finally stated that men and women are equal and that husband and wife are equal regarding marital and family life. In 1975 divorce was allowed for those married in the Catholic Church, who before could not divorce due to the *Concordata* between Salazar's government and the Holy See. (Sadlier 1989:113-129).

1.2 Women and the Bible

Many people are not aware of the evils of sexism and how it ties up with religious belief (cf Swart-Russel 1991:299). According to one biblical creation myth, woman was created from the rib of man:

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said:

This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be

called Woman because she was taken out of Man (Genesis 2:21-23).

This led to a view of women as being inferior to men and was confirmed by passages from the New Testament such as:

Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived but the woman was the deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty (I Timothy 2: 11-15).

However, feminists such as Rosemary Radford Ruether and Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza point out that in the other biblical creation story in Genesis, men and women were created equal:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).

These different versions have unfortunate consequences for theologically-based conceptions of gender. Biblical texts and Christian theology have until recently been men's only territory and they have been used to uphold a patriarchal society. However, over the past forty years there have been concerted efforts by women who have challenged patriarchy and the male-dominated church structures. These feminists have shown how the symbols of Christianity are loaded with androcentric baggage and how women have been devalued and victimised in Western society as well as in church

structures. Fiorenza (in Weaver 1985:163), as a feminist, criticized Christianity for its sexism, but as a Christian she was of the opinion that the Christian tradition is not fundamentally sexist.

Ruether (1975:65) writes:

Traditional theological images of God as father have been the sanctification of sexism and hierarchicalism precisely by defining this relationship of God as father to humanity in a domination-subordination model and by allowing ruling-class males to identify themselves with this divine fatherhood in such a way as to establish themselves in the same kind of hierarchical relationship to women and lower classes.

Ruether (1975:66) is of the opinion that Jesus overthrew this hierarchical relationship in his insistence on the role of service for the leader of the community and in the way he treated women during his ministry. Had the teachings of Jesus been followed 'the very root of sexism and clerical hierarchicalism in biblical religion would have been decisively undercut'. It was Paul, however, who reinstituted the hierarchical relationship between men and women. He established the relationship of God or Christ to the Church as the model for relationships between male and female:

But I want you to understand that Christ is supreme over every man, the husband is supreme over his wife, and God is supreme over Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3).

These models are still followed by many in modern society but they are also being challenged by ordinary men and women who are confronted with reality, including wives and mothers who are no longer confined to their homes but who are employed on a full-time basis in society at large.

2. FAMILY TIES

In agreement with their patriarchal upbringing, the identity of these women is very much tied to the family, making it a main priority in their lives although not as much as in previous generations. Most of them do not live with extended families. This could be due to the fact that they are immigrants who have left their families behind, but it could also be indicative of a change in priorities, and their being more conscious of their own need for some independence. The participants usually live with their husbands and children only. Both of the widows live alone although they have children living nearby.

In the past a widowed mother would have moved in with one of her children. This shows greater independence, since, instead, these participants have made a life of their own, although they keep closely in touch with their families, *visiting* them usually once a week, besides communicating through frequent phone calls. Of the three single participants - in their twenties - only the student lives with her parents. The reasons for the other two living separately from their parents are in one case her job, and in the other, to be closer to her boyfriend whom she intends to marry. This also shows a greater mobility in the younger generation, being independent and choosing to live away from their parents, to concentrate on their life goals. These are usually their professions and the place they want to live in and finish their studies or raise their own

families, sometimes in another country.

Regarding the single women's pattern of family visits, two of them visit their parents in Gauteng on special occasions and phone them often. The third one lives in Durban with her parents and brother and visits her relatives in Gauteng on special occasions. She also mentioned often phoning one of her cousins whom she considers her best friend.

Religion plays a role on the special occasions when they do meet, which besides anniversaries can be at weddings or at Christmas-time. It also plays a role in the value that is placed on the family unit as the "basis of society", which state is emphasised in the sermons I have heard at *San José* and other churches. Religion does not seem to play a role in the young participants' choice to live away from their parents, and their choices are influenced rather by the new cultural trends towards self-realization and economic achievement. Religion could perhaps play a role in two areas: first, their inner strength, as it helps to maintain their ethnic identity as Catholics and as Portuguese; second, in the supportive role of the religious community they joined in Durban, in one case the Portuguese church of *San José*, and in the other, the Portuguese congregation of the Durban Christian Centre. As the first young woman said:

Religion plays a big role in my life. When I came to Durban I immediately felt bonded to the community at *San José*, because I am Portuguese and Catholic.

The other young woman, a Protestant, shared the same feelings towards her Portuguese congregation. She also participates in meetings of the South African congregation and

she noted:

I feel that I have a double identity... I don't know, sometimes you feel like you are an alien in your own country.

On the issue of family worship, all the Protestants go to church with their families. Of the Catholics, only one attends church with her husband, as her daughter does not go and their two other children have emigrated. Two other Catholics (who have no children) rarely go to church, but whenever they do, their husbands accompany them. Some years ago the situation was different: six of the Catholic women used to go to church with the whole family, whilst another two used to attend with the children only. Now, two of them are widows and the children of both have left home. The children used to go to Catechism on Sundays and some would belong to the folk dancing group that would perform at church functions. Young children are therefore seen to be a motivating factor in church attendance - many Portuguese Catholic women cease to go to church when the children grow up, or go less often. The reason for that could be that many probably practise their faith as a matter of tradition rather than as a matter of an informed faith. Protestants appear to have a much stronger and continuous process of religious learning with a greater frequency of meetings and greater social bonding. But another reason could be the fact that the women belong to a patriarchal type of church which places great emphasis on the family unit. That might contribute to a sense of alienation when later in life these women do not have children and are often alone through the death of their husbands, or through separation or divorce. In this regard some Christian feminist theologians advocate new rituals which would address women's specific needs. These could include healing or cleansing rites that would deal

with situations like sexual abuse or divorce, besides rites of celebration or re-dedication which would support and encourage women at certain points in their lives, including post-menopausal rites, rites on the occasion of a change of home and rites for example, of "re-dedication of a house after burglary or other violence" (Ruether 1985:159).

3. CONTACT WITH PORTUGAL

The degree of contact the respondents had with Portugal was taken into consideration to observe any correlation between feelings of Portuguese identity, degree of connectedness to family in Portugal and religion.

All but one of the participants phones or writes often to family and sometimes to friends and the degree of contact is greater when the parents live in Portugal. Visits to Portugal take place quite often, sometimes every year or every two years, the reasons being to visit family, especially parents, and simultaneously to go on holiday. Two women said that they were going to "prepare a place to live there". Most contacts were made on a monthly basis or more, and only two mentioned phoning or writing perhaps twice a year.

The non-practising Catholic seems to be the one more family-orientated as she is more often in contact with relatives in Portugal, especially through the Internet at home, where she can see her family on the screen.

In this study being, or not being Catholic, did not affect their ties with family in Portugal, although one of the participants did indicate experiencing family rejection here in South Africa, some twenty years ago, because she was a Protestant. She said:

When we came we stayed with my brother-in-law but we were later thrown out of their home for being Protestants. They were Catholics but they never went to church. We were received by our church, and the Portuguese congregation helped us a lot.

4. EXOGAMOUS MARRIAGES

3.2.2

Four of the participants are married to non-Portuguese - only one first generation - her husband was a colleague at the University here in Durban. These days people do not mind so much their children marrying English or South Africans, but there is still a bit of concern when the parents are not very fluent in English and they regret the loss of ethnic customs in their children and grandchildren because of inter-marriage. Second-generation participants do not really mind although in recent years there has been a need among them to get in touch with their roots as they seem to start appreciating their heritage more.²

The above-mentioned first-generation Catholic woman is married to an Englishman - a non-practising Anglican. She said that she raised her children as Catholics and had no

² This is in part caused by the feeling of unsettlement that many have since the change of government in South Africa and the increase in crime, the affirmative action legislation, etc., which makes many decide to emigrate.

problems in her marriage because of religion. It is interesting that according to her, her son identifies with her as Portuguese and her daughter identifies more with the father as English! As to the two second-generation Protestants who married South Africans and are quite integrated in the South African community, they speak mostly English to their children. The identity development of children of parents of different nationalities could be an interesting area for further study.

None of the other women married outside of their faith, although in the case of three practising Catholic women, the husbands do not practise their religion. When asked what their attitude was towards marriages *outside their religious group*, the responses were varied, but two-thirds of the participants felt that it could be a problem, half of whom thought that it was not good to marry outside one's religious group.

Four participants, including one of the Protestants, felt that marriages between Catholics and Protestants should not be a problem. Two Protestants did not agree with marriages between Catholics and Protestants and one said that:

it was written in the word of God that we should not get yoked to
unbelievers.

Another Protestant participant (second-generation), referred to the same passage, but in her case, she felt that marriages between Catholics and Protestants were alright:

as long as there is goodwill,

but that it was not acceptable to marry people of other faiths. This participant goes to ecumenical prayer meetings besides meetings with the Portuguese congregation and there is a greater openness to other Christians in this second-generation respondent.

It is interesting to note that both Charismatic Catholics showed no concern with marriages outside one's faith.

The majority felt that marriages between Christians and other faiths were not good, and they referred mostly to Muslims and Jews. Only one referred to Hindus.

The Charismatic Catholics seemed to be the most optimistic about mixed marriages, one saying that as long as there is love of God it could work, and the other thinking that it could actually be an enriching experience for the children although perhaps a bit complicated for the parents. Two other respondents indicated that it could be detrimental to the sense of identity of the children and that it could influence the children not to practise at all. A young Catholic social worker felt that:

there is enough confusion and doubts in the world and parents who belong to different religious groups would add to the confusion.

In conclusion, the opinions vary but the majority see a problem with mixed marriages. The five Protestants are the most exclusive in this area, which indicates how religion can sometimes create barriers between people, and the more fundamental the religion, the more exclusive. Whether it is detrimental for children to have parents from different religious backgrounds or whether it increases their level of awareness and acceptance of

people of other faiths is an interesting area for research. The observation of one of the Charismatic Catholics is food for thought:

What matters is to believe in God ... does religion really matter?

5. SUBMISSIVENESS AND MARRIAGE

The responses on this issue were very varied and there was more similarity or uniformity in the replies from Protestants than in those by Catholics.

The two Catholics who converted to Protestantism in their twenties indicated that they had been influenced by Feminism in its fight for equal opportunities for women, but they felt that in the marriage relationship the head should be the husband with the support of the wife. As one said:

The Bible states very clearly that man is the head and the priest in the family, that is God's original plan and as such it is a perfect plan. There can't be two heads in the same family. At work it is different, a woman is capable of doing things intellectually as well as men, it is only because of past factors that women have been deprived of better education and exposure ...

In the opinion of one of the above mentioned *Catholic-turned-Protestants*:

In the Catholic church you do not feel so equal. It is a very patriarchal church. I don't know what it is like now ... women did not have much more to look forward to than to be housewives and look after their

husbands. But perhaps I am being influenced by my studies on Feminism because in my personal experience, Catholicism has not been a negative influence.

But then she added:

But Portuguese men made me feel inferior ... some.

and she could not specify why.

This is another example of the difficulty that people often have to extricate what really influenced the formation of their identity and self-image and how culture is tied up with religion. After a while, she added that there is a tendency in Portuguese men to authoritarianism, over-protectionism and deprecation of women's opinions. This, she said, she experienced especially through her father. That could be what influenced her attitude towards Portuguese men, although she admits knowing one who "is not like that". But that is a young man who already has more modern ideas and is not a first-generation man still very much imbued in his patriarchal culture.

Three of the less religious women said their marriage was an equal partnership, but the eldest admitted that the husband was still the head. This would seem to indicate a change in the new generation less influenced by religious beliefs.

Most of the Protestant men accompany their wives to the church and prayer meetings and are very committed to their faith, more than the Catholic men in this research. The former seem to be more willing to examine themselves and try to improve their behaviour regarding family relationships. The influence of their religious practice in

their relationship with wives and family in comparison to Catholic men could be an interesting area to study.

The three less religious Catholics also appear to have a happy and equal relationship. But, on probing one of the younger ones, she admitted that perhaps if it came to a fix the husband would have the last say.

An example of the way in which patriarchy can oppress women is the case of the Catholic participant who said:

I never spoke about my husband's infidelity or shortcomings in order not to stain his reputation.

This, of course, is because to stain the husband's reputation is tantamount to staining the family's reputation and her own.

Only one of the participants, a Catholic housewife and a university graduate, showed awareness of the correlation between submissiveness in women and financial dependency on their husbands.

One of the Protestants, although financially dependent on the husband like the other four, said that he always gave her his salary to manage and she never felt oppressed. This shows a different experience from the above-mentioned Catholic housewife's view regarding financial dependency and submissiveness.

A Catholic participant who works full-time complained about her husband's lack of concern towards their children. He acts as financial provider but often "forgets the emotional needs of the family".

In the opinion of one participant, woman is submissive to man "because she is weaker". But the majority of the respondents thought that submissiveness is the result of cultural rather than religious influences and that young women are much more aware of their rights and of the equality of the sexes. A young participant said:

I never want to be dependent on my husband in our house my mother set the rules and my father brought the money, but when he made up his mind on something, his word was the last word.

This case seems to be a good example of the Portuguese couple - the wife is not over-submissive and has quite a lot of power in the home, but ultimately the husband has the last say. Nevertheless the wife is the real pillar of strength of the family, often giving it direction besides her full support, heedless of her own self-realization.

In one case, the participant acknowledged that the church teachings about turning the other cheek influenced her to accept psychological abuse from her husband, until, already in her fifties, and through the advice of a priest, she realized that:

God did not want me to suffer but to be happy.

That was the road to her liberation from a situation to which other biblical injunctions had contributed. Still, she did not refute the Bible's authority as the Word of God.

In this group none of the Catholic women were of the opinion or aware that the cult of the Virgin Mary influenced women to be submissive. In one case, the participant rightly said that submission of women to men existed long before the devotion to the Virgin Mary, which can be seen in the epistles of St. Paul. She also felt that the Virgin is very near to her Son and brings graces to people, so that could not have made women feel inferior to men.

I found interesting the comment of another participant, because it seemed to be an extrapolation of her own marriage situation on to the (imagined) life of Mary. She said:

Our Lady never felt inferior to Jesus or St. Joseph. She was obedient in her marriage but never felt inferior. People would come to her to request favours from her husband ... she would sometimes even feel superior to him.

Another participant voiced a realistic appraisal when she said:

For me the Virgin is a spiritual symbol and I do not relate it to the issue of inferiority or otherwise.

For her there is a difference between what is spiritual or ideal and real-life role models. What the Virgin was or could be has no implication for her regarding how she deals with gender issues. As another one said:

Jesus and Our Lady are out there, but you make your own decisions.

They do, however, influence her in other areas of morals and ethics which are based on Bible teachings, such as being truthful or honest.

According to feminists, it is through the body and emotions that one reacts and adapts to the environment. The apparent disregard for doctrine by these Catholic women, when it comes to choice of behaviour, could be indicative of how religious belief can be superseded through "bodily experience", meaning the feeling of what is right or wrong. For these Catholic women, doctrine does not seem to be as relevant as their personal beliefs, which are informed more by modern cultural trends than by religious ideology. This could also be indicative of poor religious instruction, and of a religion transmitted more through tradition than through a commitment to the church itself, a church where male domination has been prominent, and where women have always been seen as secondary to men, and where, even today, they are not allowed to minister in church.

In conclusion, overall there seems to be a tendency to consider the husband the head of the family. This is normal in a patriarchal system, and the Protestants are the ones who seem to be the happiest with the situation, finding a balance in the relationship based on love and respect, and they quote the Bible where it compares marriage to the relationship between Christ and the church. So it can be said that patriarchy is not dead in the experience of these women. But there are also indications of an eroding of old patterns more bound with religion and of a new consolidation of identity based on a new sense of self-worth and gender equality, especially in the younger women.³

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³ Who most surely never heard any priest quoting to them the words of the prophet Jeremiah: *For the Lord has created a new thing on the earth: a woman protects a man* (Jer. 31:22).

Regarding the fact that most wives considered themselves happy in their marriages although subject to their husbands, the emphasis on it being an “equal partnership” inclines one to ask: “But how can they be both in an equal partnership but at the same time subject to their husbands?” It seems that what they want to express is that they are not submissive to the point of going against what they feel is right and they have the right to call their husband’s attention to that - which is where a man’s love and respect for his wife will make him consider her opinions on an equality basis.

The above is voiced in the book *Then God created Woman* written by “popular conference speaker and women counsellor”⁴ Deborah Newman. The author writes, referring to Adam and Eve, that “there appears to be a headship among equals.” (1997:214), then paradoxically affirms that:

the headship in their relationship fades in light of the equality and unity they shared. Headship among equals is demonstrated in a good business relationship. Adam, being slightly more responsible, would be similar to a president, and Eve would be the vice president. ... In the corporate world, if a president went around emphasizing his greater responsibility to the vice president, it wouldn’t make for a good relationship that would allow both to contribute. In a successful corporation, both officers feel their opinions and input are valuable, but they understand that the greater responsibility and greater decision-making power belong to the president and that the latter is used rarely or in deadlocked situations (Ibid).

⁴ According to insert in back cover by “Focus in the Family”, a Protestant organization.

In light of the above, Christian feminists would argue that early Christianity emphasized a *discipleship of coequals* and that leadership was dependent on charismatic gifts, not on patriarchal structures like the "household code", which emphasised the authority of the *pater familias* and a familial and political structure based on the obedience of wife to husband, slave to master and son to father. This household code, which was later made the pattern of the Christian family, according to recent research seems to have started with Aristotle's philosophy regarding household management and political ethics. Aristotle was of the opinion that patriarchal structures were not social constructs but were based on "nature". This household code eventually won over the principle of *discipleship of coequals*, which refers to a community of brothers and sisters, a "new family" (Fiorenza 1977:75) where women are equal to men and entitled to leadership.

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Newman (1997:245), apparently following the principle that "biology is destiny" also affirms that:

In the sex act, a woman is warm and receiving and the man is strong and penetrating. Both the oneness God wants for our relationships and the differences required to create oneness are reflected in the act of intercourse.

Advocating the submission of women in the marriage, she states (Ibid:228) that:

submission IS NOT doing what you're told and keeping quiet.
Submission is an attitude of respect ... *an attitude of trust in God, not in one's husband* (my italics).

This brings to mind that in this same manner the slaves were taught by Paul to obey their masters as if to God, and his words were used to condone slavery. Although later on the author does hint at the fact that women must not accept abuse, she seems to be considering mostly cases of unproblematic marriages and the positives of such advice, and not the negative impact such utterances can have in the case of abused women, for example. These women, influenced by the injunction to be submissive and also by that of "love endures all" (I Corinthians 13:4-8), and the story in Luke about the judge and the nagging widow (Luke 18:2-5), symbolic of perseverance in prayer, resort to prayer and forgiveness instead of feeling empowered to stand against oppression and injustice (Fiorenza 1998:139-159). After all, the God proclaimed by Mary in the "Magnificat" is a God of liberation of the poor and the downtrodden.

Religion can be a means of oppression and a means of liberation, or a means of integration and a means of transcendence, depending on hermeneutics, or on which biblical passage is highlighted, and also depending on the power of life experiences to bring about change. But these women do not seem to be aware of how their lives' experiences affect their religious beliefs.

6. SEXUALITY AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

Most respondents did not think that religion had influenced their sexual attitudes, considering rather that they had been regulated by the influence of their mothers and family. Only a few mentioned that it had contributed to a certain modesty in manner and dressing. One participant expressed her satisfaction with the new openness in the church

regarding sexuality, through courses for the youth especially before Confirmation, as well as through pre-marital courses and “marriage encounter” courses.

Regarding attitudes towards homosexuality, basically, half of the participants accept it, although some with more difficulty than others. The Protestants in this study were the most negative about it, three saying that in the Bible God forbids it, and another one that she respects and loves homosexuals but “they must be shown the light”. Only one Catholic referred to the Bible’s view. Other opinions ranged from feeling confused about it, to sadness, to thinking that homosexuals were misdirected. One remarked that “only God can be the judge”. On this issue it seems that the Catholic participants are the ones who more easily adapt to cultural trends and are not so worried about what the Bible or the Church preaches.

The majority of these women thought that men and women are different regarding gender roles and ways of thinking and behaving. Ten respondents felt that socialization was at least partially the cause of these differences. One participant attributed the differences to personality rather than gender. Some felt that it was difficult to know.

Most of the participants do not seem to be much aware of gender issues. An analysis of some of the opinions highlights various features regarding beliefs in the intellectual, physical and emotional differences between the sexes. Some of those opinions are informed by the Bible, such as “women are the weaker vessel”; “man was created in the image of God and woman not” and “woman was created to be the ‘helper’ of man”. One of the Protestants felt that man was superior because “he was made in the image of God

and woman came from his rib ...”

It was generally accepted that physically women have less strength. The usual stereotypes applied on the intellectual and emotional sides, references being made to women thinking more laterally and men being more rational and logic, although it was a general opinion that intellectually they are equal. There was also the opinion that men think and women feel, and therefore they complement each other. On the emotional side there was the opinion that women are more sensitive, romantic and insecure and that men make quicker decisions. Women were considered to be more nurturing and to have more insight and inner resources. Generally, there was the opinion that men have both feminine and masculine qualities but more the masculine ones, and vice-versa for women.

Some remarks were a bit paradoxical. One participant said that men and women are not “really different” and that they can have the same roles, and she does not mind if her son “washes the dishes” instead of his wife, “man can also be nurturing”. But, on the other hand, it was her opinion that “because we carry children ... we are more intuitive, more in touch with the spirit. Men just want to have fun”. She added, “we are more adventurous ... women have more strength of character”. In her marriage it is she who makes the decisions.

Some affirmations show a certain degree of confusion regarding opinions on gender. For example, one woman was of the opinion that men not women should be pastors, because they were more suited to the task, and then later on she voiced the opinion that

man and woman have the same qualities and that a woman can do whatever a man does. This is, perhaps, an example of an identity in flux, being conditioned by past experience, as well as by more modern gender equality ones, tested by female achievements. This participant appears to be trying to internalize those experiences and to adapt, in yet another spiral of identity consolidation.

Two participants who had previously identified with feminist theology, through their conversion from Catholicism to a Pentecostal church, changed their views as they came to accept the religious perspective of their church on the *complementarity of the sexes*, based on the Bible. This is an interesting example of “radical relationality”, and of the interconnection between the individual, religion and culture, as the integrating, transcending and integrating again of a person’s identity - never fixed always in flux - as a person chooses and establishes meaning, tries to bond and to relate in a “dynamic interplay of relations”. Integration and transcendence are both part of the spiral of “radical relationality”. They are not cut-and-dried but are constantly influencing the merging, growth and consolidation of identities in a fluid type of movement. There may come a time when those same women will not believe so much in the theory of the *complementarity of the sexes* but on the need for females and males to strive towards a balance between left-brain and right-brain capacities, between rationality and relationality, and in this way be able to relate to each other as fully developed human beings and as equals and companions. According to Ruether, there is no valid biological basis for categorising psychic capacities, such as reason as “masculine” and others, such as nurturing or intuition, as “feminine”. Research has shown that the left-brain has linguistic and mathematical capacities whilst the right brain specializes in

intuitive, musical, spatial and relational ones. Our culture encourages left-brain development in males and represses their right-brain capacities, whilst the opposite is done to females. That research “discloses *not* a biological basis for differentiation of males and females ... but rather the capacity of both sexes for psychic wholeness.” (Ruether 1983,1993:111-112).

7. CONCLUSION

The whole issue of gender and gender differences is still being debated in the various academic fields. In the meantime, my interviewees seem to try to behave and have a belief system which brings them peace and some measure of happiness in their gender role. Religion can therefore be said on the whole to play an integrating role in their lives. The majority of the participants seem to be happy with being female, which witnesses to a certain satisfaction with their role or either to some sort of self-deception.

In this regard the radical feminist theologian Mary Daly (1986: 23) writes:

Those who are alienated from their own deepest identity do receive a kind of security in return for accepting very limited and undifferentiated identities. The woman who single-mindedly accepts the role of ‘housewife’, for example, may to some extent avoid the experience of nothingness but she also avoids a fuller participation in being, which would be her only real security and source of community.

The above points to the fact that often a woman, or anyone in a situation of dependence or oppression, does not want to admit to having a sense of failure and dissatisfaction,

and conforms to the "status quo" because it brings with it some sort of immediate security, although in the process self-realization, creativity and real happiness are lost.

On the issue of the possible influence of the cult of the Virgin Mary on submissiveness in women, the Catholic participants did not seem to think that it had any influence, considering her either as a spiritual symbol which was not to be related to the issue of inferiority of women, or feeling that the Virgin Mary is very powerful and as such could not make women feel inferior to men.

Although the majority indicated that they feel happier with male priests and pastors rather than female ones, some did recognize that it might be a question of habit.

Whilst there is an indication of financial dependency causing submissiveness of the wife to the husband, there seems to be a growing awareness of the equality of the sexes, especially in the younger generation.

All the Protestants in this research mentioned the Bible as the basis for gender relationships, especially in marriage, and none showed any inclination to challenge or oppose this. In this regard, the Catholic women seemed to be less concerned with religious beliefs regarding differences between the sexes, and were more influenced by cultural trends. They did not quote the Bible, as the Protestants did, as justification for relationships with their husbands or with men in general. They seemed to follow instead traditional and cultural trends. This is understandable when one remembers that for Protestants God is mainly in Scripture, the Word of God, whilst as Fiorenza (1998:84)

says, quoting Mary Anne Talbot:

... Catholics commune with God mainly through participation in the sacraments, and especially the Mass.

Most women considered themselves happy in their marriages although subject to their husbands, the emphasis on it being an "equal partnership". The paradoxical nature of this statement was analysed by comparison with both the opinion of a modern Protestant writer, and the perspectives of Christian feminist theologians like Fiorenza and Ruether. It was suggested that a better solution should be a relationship of co-equals, where women and men relate to each other in "reciprocity" and where social structures are changed and leadership is based on charismatic gifts rather than hierarchy.

It is Ruether's (1977:79) opinion that we:

have to imagine a new psychodynamics of relationship that no longer identifies activity with domination and receptivity with dependency.

She suggests a "New Model" of human relationships based on reciprocity, whereas each person actualizes herself or himself and simultaneously helps the other to do the same. That will call for a sharing of roles in a manner that will allow reciprocity. Instead of women being the full-time supporter of men's activities, jobs would be organized in a manner that men would also be the nurturers and caregivers of children, and women would participate in men's social roles and activities. As she says:

This will demand more than a change of consciousness or a change of cultural symbolism. It also means a change of power

relationships between the sexes. We will have to reorganize the economy and the way jobs are structured and located in relation to home (Ibid:80).

According to Fiorenza (1984:91) in *Bread not Stone*:

The early Christian ethos of co-equal discipleship in community could provide a model for the “new family” as an adult community of equality, mutuality, and responsibility for the home and for the ‘world’. It could provide a model for the restructuring of the ‘patriarchal household of God’ into a kinship community without clerical fathers and spiritual masters, a community not patterned after the patriarchal family. A feminist critical hermeneutics of liberation seeks to reactivate this early Christian ethos for today so that it can become a transforming historical model for the ordering of interpersonal communities, society, and the churches.

I do not think that in general the participants are aware of how the Bible has been used to support patriarchy. This research indicates that there might be a need for discussions on theological issues and biblical hermeneutics in order to enlighten and empower women.

As Freire says (in Daly 1986:48) “any oppressed group ... suffers from a divided

consciousness" and they make their own the consciousness of the oppressor, becoming imprisoned in "self-defeating behaviour". When a woman rebels she could be in for social rejection and loneliness. That is why it is important for women to get together, share their stories, and in the process build up sisterhood consciousness. That is why "women-church" is necessary. "Women church" is the community of liberated sisterhood, of women who "delegitimize the theological myths that justify the *ecclesia* of patriarchy and begin to form liturgies to midwife their liberation from it" (Ruether 1985:61). This "women-church" also applies to the other Christian churches and is the herald of the true "Church" of women and men liberated from oppression (Ibid.).

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL NETWORK AND INTEGRATION

In this chapter the degree of integration or alienation of the participants with regard to both the South African and Portuguese communities are explored. The possible influence of religion in the social experience, and vice versa, was analysed by examining the different groups in the Portuguese community, their social network and other cultural elements such as language, occupation, and politics. Some of what follows in this chapter has been touched on in previous sections and in order to avoid repetition the reader will simply be referred to the relevant paragraphs.

1. DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE PORTUGUES COMMUNITY

The main differences amongst Madeirans, Mozambicans, Continentals, and Angolans arise from their backgrounds and the history of their immigration, and are sometimes apparent in the level of education and economic circumstances, besides the accent in the case of Madeirans. Madeirans generally come from a very poor rural background in Madeira and in South Africa they had to start working in humble positions, becoming market gardeners, farm workers and eventually tea-room owners and entrepreneurs. They are perceived as clinging together and are identifiable by their accent, as above-mentioned. These days however, many Madeirans are quite well off and well educated.

The majority of Mozambicans and Angolans came to this country as a result of the political changes in their own countries (see chapter 2 section 3). They came as refugees and stayed in camps when they arrived. The Mozambicans especially, already knew South Africans as there were quite a few South African companies which employed locals in Mozambique, and there was a lot of commercial interchange between the two countries. Furthermore, South Africa was often the preferred destination for family holidays and many Mozambicans received their education in South Africa. As such they were easily absorbed by businesses and industry when they emigrated (see chapter 2 section 3). Participants considered Mozambicans as more anglicized and Madeirans thought that both Mozambicans and Continentals considered themselves superior to others. One participant remarked: "Mozambicans and Angolans do not like Continentals that much." She added:

... during colonial days, Mozambicans and Angolans were considered second-class citizens in Portugal and called *retornados* (returnees) when they arrived there after the liberation of the colonies.

This rejection by the people in Portugal caused resentment which still rankles with some. There is, however, no real animosity amongst the different groups and as one of them said:

We all speak the same language and have the same values, and family is always first which brings us together.

Both the Catholic and Protestant churches contribute to this view with their emphasis on the value of the family unit.

2. SOCIAL NETWORK

2.1 Places where Portuguese meet as a Community

According to the participants the three main centres where the Portuguese gather are the Portuguese Roman Catholic Church – the Church of *San José* - the Portuguese Association of Natal (APN) and the Portuguese Women's League (see chapter 2 section 4.4). The APN is also known as the Portuguese Club or just The Club (*O Clube*). Most of those who are involved at the Church of *San José* do not go to the *Clube* and vice versa. Five participants attend the Women's League meetings on a regular basis.

Nine participants (including the five Protestants) said that their church was important to their social life. Of the eleven Catholics only three indicated that their church was a major contributing factor in their social life - these respondents participate in a weekly prayer meeting in addition to attending Mass on Sundays. This reflects the greater success of the Protestant churches in fulfilling not only the spiritual needs, but also the social needs of their members. This could be one of the reasons why some Portuguese women outgrew their original Catholic identity since they found more support and meaning in their new religious environment (See chapter 3 section 3.3.1). However, the women who worship in the Portuguese-speaking congregation of a Protestant church also become somewhat estranged from the wider Portuguese community. On the whole the Protestant participants felt somewhat separated from the traditional Catholic Portuguese, who usually do not consider Protestants as “real” Portuguese.

The women who attend the Women's League meetings are concerned not only with their ethnic identity and family values but also with their position as women in society. In Durban they have about 30 members. The League promotes the recognition of the value of the Portuguese women and the maintenance of the Portuguese culture and language. They mostly hold socials and attend lectures on various topics by professional women who are usually Portuguese, and also demonstrations by women with different artistic skills, as well as sharing experiences with other women's groups. They occasionally visit charitable organizations and make donations. In 1999 they started a Portuguese book club functioning at the home of the League's secretary. Most books were donated by the University of Natal when it closed its Department of Portuguese.

The Portuguese Association of Natal (APN), with a membership of about 200, has a restaurant, basketball court and a small library. On special occasions such as Portugal's National Day there are all kinds of activities and exhibitions such as car competitions, soccer games, food stalls, art and craft exhibitions by local artists, and dinner-dances. South Africans and other foreigners are invited to celebrate these occasions with the Portuguese.

Besides the churches, the APN, and the Women's League, it is in the homes where people meet more at ease with friends and family, mostly for food sharing and also to listen to music or to play games, especially the men who like to play cards. Ten participants - including four first-generation women - mentioned visiting the homes of South African families. Six of these are home executives, four of whom are first-generation women. Although this is a good average compared to the sixteen women of

this group, the majority still feel that they have more in common with Portuguese and that includes three second-generation ones - three other second-generation ones are not sure. As one first-generation participant said:

But there are not many Portuguese in Durban, it is not like in Johannesburg, so you have to socialize with South Africans.

It appears that many of them, especially if first-generation immigrants, do not experience much intimacy in their relationships with South Africans. As I have written elsewhere (Pereira 1995:94), it has been my observation that the majority still do not feel fully integrated into the South African society. They continue to experience cultural and temperamental differences which seem to affect relationships with outsiders. Although the second-generation immigrants are usually much more integrated in the South African community, in general, the participants meet mostly with other Portuguese people at places where their Portuguese identity can be reinforced - especially if they are first-generation immigrants.

These findings confirm the fluidity of identity and the journey along the borders of both cultures that these immigrants experience, sometimes no longer sure of who they are or where they are at home.

2.2 Membership in non-Portuguese Associations

Apart from the Church, the Portuguese Women's League and the Portuguese Club (APN), four participants mentioned non-Portuguese organisations to which they belong:

the National Art Gallery; Co-workers of Mother Teresa; Westville International Women's League; Westville Bowling Association; the Durban Historical Transport Association and Alliance Française.

Few of these women seem to feel the need to involve themselves in the wider cultural circle. It is also notable that those who are involved are from Mozambique, which ties up with section 1 above, which mentions that the Mozambicans are more integrated into the South African community.

3. SOCIAL INTEGRATION

3.1 Language

3.1.1 English

Regarding fluency in English, seven participants considered themselves very good and only two admitted that they were not very conversant in English. The others said that they spoke it reasonably well. The inability to speak English has been a barrier to contact with South Africans.

3.1.2 Portuguese

Language might not be essential for an individual to feel strongly about his or her ethnic identity, but it does certainly bring forth feelings of belonging, pride in one's nationality

and is a barrier against feelings of unworthiness sometimes cast upon emigrants by their host people (cf. Marzec 1988:46,47). All respondents agreed that the ability to speak and write Portuguese, especially to speak, is important in maintaining their ethnic identity.

The Portuguese church of *San José* has been influential in promoting the use of the language, as until recently the Mass was said in Portuguese and the Catechism lessons were taught in Portuguese. In her study of the Polish community in the UK, Joanna Marzec (1988:47,48) points out that language is the first means of calling forth feelings of ethnic identity but for the second-generation it is parentage which is most significant¹. This is indeed the case with the Portuguese participants where the second-generation is not particularly concerned about speaking the language but do so mostly to please their parents. However, they consider themselves Portuguese or Portuguese South Africans because they have Portuguese parents.

Although the priest of *San José* speaks Portuguese it was my experience there at a Mother's Day service to receive a flower from a child with a note attached which read "God bless you" in English. The children also sang a song in English. This upsets some of the parishioners and one of them told me that the children understood English better and the parents do not care if they do not learn to speak Portuguese.

¹ J. Marzec (1988:30), speaking about the Poles also says that "for those Poles who have undergone the specific experience of migration, Catholicism relates more to their sense of national *descent* and feeling of ethnic distinctiveness in the host country."

There is a decline in the use of the Portuguese language as the new generations become more involved in the larger culture. The church of *San José* reflects this cultural trend to the chagrin of the older generation and the neutrality or disinterest of the younger group (See chapter 3 section 2.1). According to Mol (1976:2), it is possible that our capacity for adaptation does not change the initial instinct for survival which is closely related to the need for integration and identity. This drive can work both ways, to integrate and to transcend, and it could indeed lead the younger generation to outgrow their parents' culture and to feel the need to identify and integrate with the host society.

3.2 Religion, Community, and Ethnic Identity

Regarding Catholicism and ethnic identity, it appears that for some of the women these elements are closely linked whilst others can separate their sense of being Portuguese from their religion. Seven participants thought that in principle *religion should be separate* from one's ethnic identity, but they admitted that because one is Portuguese one cannot be anything else but Catholic, and this was the opinion of even the agnostic one. In the opinion of one participant:

Catholicism is the main religion in Portugal, so the traditions in the church add more quality to the Portuguese culture.

Six respondents were sure *that religion and ethnic identity were bound together through one's traditions*.

On the issue of religion and community eight participants (four Catholics and four Protestants) said that the church had helped their integration into the *South African community*. One Catholic said that a Catholic charismatic group had helped her when she came to a South African boarding school and this group eventually became “like a family” to her. The other three Catholics worship or have worshipped at South African churches and got involved in prayer groups and Bible study groups, and in this way created new friends and relationships which contributed to their integration into the South African community. Three of the four above-mentioned Protestants said that through their congregation they made South African friends who in time became the core of their social life.

The results of this study indicate that ten of the sixteen participants seem to be integrated with the South African community at the level of private social relationships, even if not on too intimate a base.

Two women have friends of other races. Both have university degrees and they did not credit the church with any influence in their social network. This might indicate a *correlation between higher educational levels and an open approach to other races*. The reasons for these cross-racial friendships could, however, also be attributed to *opportunities that exist for such friendships in multiracial universities*.

Regarding the contribution of the church to integration into the *Portuguese community*, seven participants (five Catholics and two Protestants) acknowledged that the church had contributed to their ethnic integration, but regarding the Protestants, only the first-

generation Protestant has made friends amongst the Portuguese of her congregation (See chapter 3 section 2.1). The Catholics go to the church of *San José* and the Protestants belong to the Portuguese-speaking congregation of the Durban Christian Centre. These Protestants do not usually mix with the larger Portuguese community.

A Protestant participant considered language, rather than the Church, as the bond which binds people together as Portuguese. But since the Church is the vehicle through which the language is used, it does not detract from the importance of the Church as a binding factor in the participants' lives.

Of five participants who did not experience the contribution of the church to integration, there were two who do not practise, one who only recently started attending services, and two who attend church only sporadically.

Regarding *degree of identification with Portuguese or South Africans*, ten participants said that they felt they have more in common with Portuguese people. This ties up with the results in section 2 where most of the women identified more with the Portuguese community. Two second-generation respondents remarked that they did not know Portuguese people that well and simply felt more at home amongst South Africans. A first-generation participant who got involved with South Africans through business associations, and also through participation in some organizations where she made friends with other South African women, feels that she identifies with both. She became a South African citizen some years ago. Although considering herself Portuguese, she sometimes identifies more with people of the hosting culture. She has been to Portugal a

number of times but does not really feel at home there. She remarked that she sometimes does not know whether she is Portuguese, South African or Mozambican. This participant is a good example of a crossing of ethnic identity boundaries and of moving between those boundaries, or rather, of possessing a mobile identity that adapts and changes as it negotiates with the social environment.

3.3 Occupation and Politics

Since the occupation of the women probably had an influence on their social relationships I analysed the participants' situation in this regard. As mentioned in chapter 1, the sample of sixteen women included nine housewives, one student and six professional women.

Three of the women who hold jobs, all second-generation, said that their occupation had increased their social network and contributed to integration in the South African milieu.

The fact that more than half are not employed indicates that they did not have much exposure to outside influence besides the home and the church or other organizations. It would appear that these women are more inclined to maintain their own Portuguese social network. However, six of these house executives have South African friends in their social network. There is at least one case of a first-generation housewife who is one of the most integrated in the South African community. She has close South African friends and she chose to become a South African citizen. On the other hand a much

younger participant, although working in a South African company, maintains close ties with only Portuguese friends. So it appears that personality might be more important than occupation when it comes to social integration.

I also analysed the participants' interest in *politics* in order to measure the degree of interest or participation in Portuguese and South African community life. Only two Catholics showed any interest in politics. Six women said that if they had to, they would prefer to talk about South African politics rather than Portuguese, which indicates a certain integration into the wider host community. Only two women would prefer to talk about Portuguese politics.

Overall the results indicate a lack of interest in politics amongst the participants which ties up with the findings shown in chapter 2 regarding the Portuguese community and their non-involvement in politics. One of the participants attributed her growing awareness of racial inequality to the teachings of the Church. However, the priests were usually careful not to hurt the feelings of the traumatized Portuguese immigrants and avoided talking politics from the pulpit. (See chapter 2 section 4.4). The Portuguese women usually perpetuated the political ignorance created by the repressive Portuguese government before 1974 (basically women were only given the right to vote in Portugal towards the end of the 1960s (See chapter 4). Therefore, although they are now eligible to vote, they have been denied that right for so long that they have not yet developed a particular interest in politics.

However, the influence of politics on ethnic identity is illustrated by the experience of

two participants from Mozambique, who eventually identified more strongly with Portugal after the take-over by the Frelimo government in Mozambique. The religious beliefs of a practising Catholic participant were affected by the political change in her country and by the fact that the Catholic Church favoured the “freedom fighters” which made her feel alienated from the Church and threatened in her ethnic identity (See chapter 3 section 3.3.2). In this case her religious allegiance was jeopardized by her political opinions and she had to distance herself from her church in order to re-establish her sense of who she was and re-consolidate her ethnic identity. Eventually she returned to the Church, but in a new form of relationship that is more independent and critical.

4. CONCLUSION

Overall this research indicates that in the case of the Portuguese women in this sample, religion enhances their ethnic identity when they participate in worship in the Portuguese Church of *San José* or in a Protestant Portuguese-speaking congregation. However, religion also contributes to a decline in their ethnic identity and their assimilation into the wider South African community when they worship in a South African church.

The greater success of Protestant churches regarding community building was experienced by some of the participants.

The church, homes, and the Portuguese Women's League are the places where these participants meet more at ease. In those environments they reinforce their value-system and their ethnic identity. At the Portuguese Women's League their worth as women is emphasised, and here they also try to socialize with women from other communities. At the Portuguese Club foreigners are invited to celebrate certain festivities which also contributes to cross-cultural contact.

Indications are that personality is perhaps more influential than occupation as far as social integration is concerned. Political awareness as evidence of social integration can be misleading since the anti-feminist legislation of the dictatorial regime in Portugal before 1974 has probably contributed to the apathy of the participants in this regard.

In the opinion of some participants there is a close bond between religion and ethnic identity and "the traditions in the church add more quality to the Portuguese culture". However, all are not agreed on this. It was also established that there is a decline in the use of Portuguese in the Church of *San José* when it comes to teaching children as they are now more familiar with English, and this is a matter of concern for some.

Regarding the link between *religion and community*, both Protestants and Catholics attributed some of the success of their integration into the South African and the Portuguese communities to their churches - although Protestants usually do not mix with the larger Portuguese community. However, most of the participants agreed that they have more in common with Portuguese people than with South Africans. A few,

mostly second-generation participants, admitted that they felt more at home amongst South Africans.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

1. GENERAL

This study was done with a group of sixteen women, eleven Catholics and five Protestants, and it can not be generalised to apply to all the Portuguese women in Durban or for that matter South Africa. The same study done in Johannesburg, Pretoria or Cape Town will in all probability give different results.

There was a lot of diversity in this work, regarding both the group itself and also the experiences of the participants, which brings to awareness the idiosyncrasies, paradoxes and confusion regarding the interaction between religion and identity and community relations, which are part and parcel of the experience of these particular women immigrants or descendants of immigrants in Durban.

This research will contribute to an increase of knowledge amongst scholars regarding the relations between women's identity and religion and culture in the context of Christian ethnic minorities struggling to adapt to ever changing social environments - in this case Portuguese women immigrants, mostly Catholics.

Regarding the maintenance, transcending or transformation of personal, religious and ethnic identity as the participants enter into the larger South African society with its religious and cultural pluralism, indications are that most try to maintain their personal, religious and ethnic identity, but that changes are taking place. Some dilution of ethnic and religious identity, especially among the younger generation, is apparent.

2. RELIGION

Religion has within itself the seeds for both integration and for change, and humans do not just accept their culture, they also respond to it and create new identities and new forms of religion and society. People are constantly seeking coherence, a better sense of relatedness and need to feel psychologically and socially in equilibrium with their surroundings (See chapter 1 section 2.1).

In the light of the above, I have tried to analyze how religion (both institutional and private) has influenced the lives of the participants and how their personal and social lives and experiences have influenced their religion.

Some of the women's opinions and experiences were analysed in the light of the views of Christian theologians - like Mary Daly, but especially Fiorenza and Ruether. The issues involved included the internalization of learnt gender roles, the use of the Bible by a patriarchal church in a way that led to the oppression of women, and the need to reinterpret the Word of God under a feminist perspective in order to liberate women (See chapter 4 section 1.2). In this regard, the concept of "women church" - which can

be interpreted as a forefront of the women and men of the future, liberated and free to be full human beings - and the concept of “reciprocity”, or mutual self-actualization - as the means for healthy gender and social relationships - were highlighted, as well as the need for creativity, an important element in the way forward (See chapter 4 section 6 and 7, and chapter 1 section 4).

2.1 Institutional Religion

The churches can contribute to women’s identity through the use of the “Word of God” in sermons and rituals which encourage women to internalize concepts of who they are and what they are in this world for. In this way, the churches strengthen their sense of self and give them a feeling of meaning in life. The churches can also shape their understanding of their role as wives and mothers and they have encouraged women to accept their husbands as the head of the family, and to be submissive and self-sacrificing.

The Protestant churches contribute to greater social binding. The Bible is more used as a source of instruction for daily life and there is more participation in prayer meetings.

Overall, both Catholic and Protestant churches have contributed to many of these *women’s personal and social identity* and they have a continuing influence in the pattern of their *family relationships*.

Regarding ethnic identity the Portuguese Roman Catholic church of *San José* has contributed to strengthening the ethnic identity of the participants. It also happens, but to a lesser degree, to those who belong to a Protestant church and join its Portuguese-speaking congregation. In recent times the Portuguese have become very few in those congregations, so the language is basically the only bonding element and the reminder of their roots, and there is not much impact in the area of ethnic social cohesion. Protestant Portuguese do not usually get involved in the larger Portuguese community. They are usually considered as lesser Portuguese by some of their compatriots.

The churches contribute to the welding of new identities through rites of passage, like marriage and death ceremonies. They *can also contribute to changes of attitude* when they encourage people to reconsider their attitudes and assumptions - in at least one case a participant experienced a change in racial attitude as a result of the advice of a priest. *The experience of Protestant worship and fellowship* led some Catholics to convert to Protestant churches and to an enhancement of their spiritual wellbeing and social relationships.

But women's social and spiritual experiences can also change their attitudes and this in turn can change their loyalty to their church. Through feminists' - or rather "womanists"¹ - struggle for recognition of women's rights and their contribution to the awareness of how the Bible has been used by the male dominated church to uphold

¹ See chapter 3 section 3.3.2, footnote 7.

patriarchy, many women have become more aware of their subservient situation in society and in the church. This has contributed to them trying to liberate themselves, especially in their marriage situation (see below).

The *experience of conversion* has an effect on affiliation and this is another way that women influence institutional religion. In some cases these women experienced the Catholic church as dogmatic and rigid. In the Protestant churches, especially the Pentecostalist type of churches, they found the spirituality, doctrinal clarity, community building and sense of belonging that fitted and consolidated their personal and social needs, their sense of identity. This trend often led them away from the Portuguese community and integrated them into South African ones. In most of these cases there was a rejection of elements of the traditional religion and an identification with a new community of believers. The loss of the faithful should influence the Catholic Church to reconsider their doctrines and their practices and pay more attention to women's needs and opinions.

Institutionalised religion is less important than one might think, because many women stop attending regularly once the children are grown up. For some of the participants religion seems to be only a part of culture - once their children are grown up and no longer go to church they do not go as often. This could indicate that those women either do not feel the need to participate because they had never belonged as a question of real faith or, that they are somehow disillusioned with their church. Besides, when they are no longer active mothers - which sometimes goes together with being on their own

through divorce or the death of their husbands - they do not fit in the same manner in a church very much family orientated and in which the sermons and rituals do not usually address the needs and problems of women – a patriarchal church.

Most Catholic participants disagree with the rulings by the Pope on contraception, divorce and abortion, and they do what in their conscience they feel is right, in a pragmatic way, taking into consideration the future wellbeing of the child - in the case of abortion - of themselves, and their families. In their opinion, because priests are not married and do not have a family, they cannot understand the realities of life, and regarding celibacy of priests, most do not agree with it and think that this causes too many problems.

In short, these women are becoming more critical of their church and priesthood. Women are usually in the majority when it comes to churchgoers and that makes them a force with the potential to effect changes in institutionalized religion. Women are church and they will eventually have an impact on it. As their awareness and criticism become more prevalent it will eventually force the Catholic priesthood to self-scrutiny and change in order to ensure the loyalty of their flock – who are mostly women. After all, women, who are still denied the right to priesthood, are often the right hand of male priests, helping them in various areas from administration to catechesis. They cook and sew and raise funds and their efforts are always on a voluntary basis.

Many Catholics do not read or discuss the Bible that much, if at all, although since Vatican II changes have taken place and some Catholics now also participate in Bible study groups. Some participants are still very uncritical and subject to the authority of the priests when it comes to Bible study groups. Some believe that the Spirit can lead them in interpretation. The latter can eventually contribute to diminish the authority of the male clergy and strengthen the power of “women church” (see chapter 4 section 7).

It should be noted that Protestants do not have the same strict rules as Catholics do regarding, for example, divorce and contraception.

Higher education can also affect their loyalty to the church as an institution. In the case of some participants their experience of other religions/churches, and the development of their critical powers when they joined a higher education institution had an influence on their religious beliefs and on their conversion to Pentecostalist churches or on a change to a syncretic type of faith. In all these cases there was a rejection of institutionalized religion and either a conversion to a faith more Bible-centered and less priestly mediated, or the development of a personal faith based on an amalgamation of elements from both Christian and eastern religions.

2.2 Personal Religious Beliefs

The most prevalent beliefs of the participants are in a loving God, in Jesus, in the Virgin Mary, in the Bible, in life after death and in the power of prayer. Some women have

more unconventional beliefs - some of the Catholics might sporadically consult a clairvoyant or a sangoma when they are worried about something. But in all cases they feel that their Christian beliefs are an integrated part of their identity. They bring them comfort and encourage them in difficult times. Their beliefs are usually very conservative and there is little disagreement on the basic Christian teachings. They influence their code of conduct and their sexual behaviour, but the women seem to attribute their sexual behaviour codes rather to their culture and their mothers, seemingly unaware of the influence religion has on culture and, as such, on their mothers.

The personal religion of some of the participants was influenced by experiences of *visions, dreams and other psychological experiences*. These experiences, informed by and interpreted within the framework of their beliefs, always strengthened their personal identity, their will and spirit, as well as their faith. They became more sure about their own faith, practising it with even more conviction.

Indications are that their belief in forgiveness and sacrifice contributes to keeping families together, regardless of the unfaithfulness of husbands or other forms of abuse. On the other hand, their belief that God came to bring fullness of life can encourage them to struggle for self-realization and freedom from abusive situations, enabling them to put an end to unhealthy types of marriages.

The participants' personal beliefs did not remain unchanged for long periods of time. The causes of changes in beliefs and practices can be various and it includes the influence of society (See section 2.1) and their own identity development.

There are also a few who seem to be in some sort of limbo, searching, or still belonging to their Catholic faith but not practising all the time - their fervour flaring up, subsiding and flaring up again, depending perhaps on their moods and experiences.

According to the theoretical framework of this research, religion can play a role in integration into one's community and strengthening of one's identity, but can also play a role in the transformation of one's sense of self and contribute to the involvement in the larger society in a new spiral of one's mobile identity - transcendence is not total, as the individual keeps negotiating old and new identities.

3. FAMILY AND GENDER

In general these women do not reflect much on the role of religion in their lives and experiences, as well as, vice versa, how their experiences impinge on their religion (See section 2.1). However, they all bear the signs of a male-dominated hierarchical religion and this socialisation has led them to be long suffering and obedient in their marriages.

Regarding the contribution of the devotion to Mary to submissiveness in relation to men, the respondents' replies indicate that it is caused rather by society's pressure to

conform, religion and economic circumstances. They did not feel that their devotion to Mary was a contributing factor. Mary is seen as being on a high spiritual level, as a mother and a powerful protector, not an example to be copied at a marital level.

Most participants are becoming aware of their subservient position, and those who feel that for them it is too late want their daughters to study and be economically independent in order to escape from this burden. The younger generation is very much aware of the equality of the sexes. The contradictory statements and opinions regarding gender roles, point to some confusion or identity in flux. It indicates a mind conditioned by past experience although open to the realization of gender equality proven by modern female achievements - but this awareness has not yet been fully internalized.

With regard to the marital relationships, all the Protestants mentioned the Bible as the basis for their beliefs and the attitude of love and respect and equality. They are content to let the husband be the head of their family within that paradigm. As such submission goes along with equality, which is a bit of a paradox. (See chapter 4, section 7.) And so it follows that patriarchy is still alive and well, as these women seem to be quite satisfied with letting the husbands be in a superior position in the marriage. But this research also indicates that the Protestant men are more involved in their churches together with their wives, and they are usually more open to self-examination and improvement regarding marital and family relationships than their Catholic counterparts.

Catholics in this research seem to be more influenced by cultural trends when it comes to gender roles. Only one Catholic quoted the Bible in this area whilst all Protestants quoted the Bible as the basis for their opinions.

These participants do not favour inter-religious marriages unless between Catholics and Protestants and even those are regarded with some suspicion. The Protestants are the most exclusive in this area. Whether these marriages are psychologically unfavourable for children's identity consolidation, or whether they contribute to broaden their minds towards social tolerance or acceptance of people different from them, is food for thought.

The respondents seem to be satisfied with being women, which points to a certain satisfaction with their role or else a case of self-deception, i.e., they do not want to admit that they feel frustrated or abused and engage in "self-defeating behaviour" (see chapter 4, section 7). After all indications are that the first-generation mothers want their daughters to get jobs and be independent from their husbands.

4. RELIGION, LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL NETWORK

Most participants retain their religious identity - Catholicism - as a feature of their ethnic identity, even if not as practising Catholics. In other words, the fact that they are Portuguese - which is part of their experience of life, the way they relate to others and

the way they see themselves - contributes to their identification with Catholicism and, as such, to their religious beliefs.

For the practising participants the main means of association is their churches. Regarding integration into the Portuguese community, the Church of *San José* is a means of strengthening their ethnic identity, through having the services in Portuguese and socializing with other Portuguese at get-togethers and socials, which include the participation of the children's folk dancing group.

Those who go to Protestant churches, but join a Portuguese-speaking congregation, still maintain ethnic ties, especially through the bonding effect of sharing the same language, but they do not bond usually with the larger Portuguese community, as previously mentioned. (See section 2.1.) Those who do not join a Portuguese-speaking congregation maintain ties only with their families and a few Portuguese friends, integrating more into the South African community.

The Catholic women who worship at South African churches tend to move away from the Portuguese community and integrate into the South African community. Although most participants go to South African churches and many socialize in South African homes, they all, especially if first-generation, feel more at ease with Portuguese people. This indicates that there is both an outward movement of integration into the larger society and a maintenance of close ties with Portuguese. Overall they have more in common with Portuguese than with South Africans.

In short, the maintenance or transcending of personal and ethnic identities is influenced by the church they belong to: Portuguese or South African. The choice of church is sometimes influenced by the place of residence or by the time they wish to attend Mass. In the case of their going to a South African church instead of the church of *San José*, it could also mean that there was not the same need to consolidate their national identity, feeling at ease to integrate with the host society.

In general, women take their role as conservator of ethnic identity quite seriously, but this drive is stronger in the first-generation.

Language plays an important part in ethnic identity and the second generation, although they identify with the Portuguese, sometimes are not fluent in reading or writing the language, which has an influence in the dilution of their ethnic identity. If the Portuguese in Durban are to maintain their ethnic identity, the younger generation will have to try to maintain their knowledge of Portuguese, and learn the history as well, so that they can identify with the older generation and bond with their peers through common ethnic knowledge.

A few participants have no ties with the South African community. The reason lies in their inability to speak English. This has almost certainly contributed to their need to enhance their ethnic identity and to maintain close ties only with the church of *San José* or with a Portuguese-speaking Protestant congregation.

5. INTER-GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE

There is a big difference between the first-generation immigrants who had to struggle to adapt and to support the husband and the children, often without being able to speak English, and the next generations.

The second-generation participants are usually more integrated into the wider South African society. Those born or settled in South Africa when very young and who converted to Protestantism in their twenties are basically South Africans. Still, they respect the nationality of their parents and acknowledge their Portuguese heritage.

In contrast to the above, the first-generation Protestants who converted when young and were still in their Portuguese place of origin, strongly retain their sense of being Portuguese.

The second generation is leaving behind traditional roles and becoming more independent of the opposite sex and more career orientated. Among the married Protestants in this research there was a greater tendency to stick to patriarchal family roles. The second-generation, already schooled in South Africa, has the problem of living between two cultures and of trying to resolve that conflict, usually opting to follow the host culture. But they still honour their own culture and speak Portuguese - some better than others. They eventually get jobs, and in regard to gender roles they become much more emancipated than their mothers.

On the whole, the third generation usually does not speak the language any longer and they are basically South Africans. If they keep in touch with older members of the family or visit Portugal, then a desire to know their roots might arise in them. Another way to try to maintain their Portuguese identity is by attending a Portuguese school. (See chapter 2 section 4.4.) The fact that the children at the church of *San José* were recently learning Catechism in English as they understand it better, but that at the moment classes have stopped (see chapter 3, footnote 5) is a case for concern for many parishioners.

There are times when some of these women immigrants, especially if second-generation, feel confused and do not know whether they are Portuguese, South African or Mozambican. As one said: "I feel an alien in my own country". This indicates the degree of alienation and frustration that at times these youngsters experience - not sure of where their identity and their loyalty really lies. On the one side they have their parents, their family and the traditions they try to transmit to them, and on the other side they have their peers, their South African schooling, their marriage partners and their families, who might not even be South African! Theirs is indeed a fluid identity conditioned, by where and with whom they are, and by the memories and feelings that cross their minds at a specific point in time.

6. FURTHER AREAS FOR RESEARCH

Further areas for research, as already indicated, would be women in other towns in South Africa. In the Gauteng area, for example, there is a much greater concentration of Portuguese people, which would make the research of the women there quite meaningful. It will be interesting also to study the Portuguese men, their conceptions, perceptions and experiences as immigrants, compared to the women. This would give a more solid account of the experience of the Portuguese in South Africa regarding religion, identity and social integration, as well as the different experiences due to gender.

Besides the above, it would be valuable to study children of mixed ethnic and religious marriages as far as identity, religion and social life is concerned. This in order to establish, for example, whether they are more or less tolerant of other cultures and religions, whether they are more or less religiously inclined, and whether religion affects their psychological balance and their sense of identity.

Another important area could be the study of conversion to Protestantism, as it seems to lead to an erosion of ethnic identity amongst the Portuguese.

Of interest would also be research on the similarities and differences between Catholic and Protestant men regarding their sense of responsibility, commitment and care towards their wives and families and reasons for any differences.

7. THE FUTURE

The results of this research show that religion has been a means of spiritual empowerment for these women in the sense of inner strength and consolidation of character, but not so much as empowerment regarding equality of sexes or economic independence. In order to have power and be able to choose their own lives, women must be economically self-sufficient. Only then are they in a situation to negotiate their status in the marriage and in the family. To this end, they also need to become aware of their internalization of patriarchal role models and social structures, in this way being open to creativity and to new possibilities in the field of power relationships, be they gender, economic or eco-social relationships.

As to the future of the Portuguese women immigrants in Durban, this study shows that Catholicism is being challenged as some are converting to Protestantism, and their ethnicity is also threatened as some are joining South African churches. In this way religion is contributing towards what looks like a steady movement of integration into the wider community. The Portuguese church of *San José* is losing parishioners both to other South African churches and because of emigration.

Indications are that the younger generation are not only merging with the South African community but are also leaving the country, so it does not seem that those who stay will keep their national identity for long. It might be there if they keep in touch with families in Portugal and/or learn their language and culture.

It is up to women (and men) to preserve their ethnic identity through fostering the knowledge of the language and traditions in the new generation, at home and through Portuguese schools or through choosing Portuguese as an alternative language in a South African school when possible (see chapter 2 section 4.4). The existing associations could also try to provide the entertainment needed to bring the youth together as Portuguese. This is not an easy task as the Portuguese population in Durban is now at a stage of mobility, some emigrating, and some too busy trying to survive economically to have the drive to dedicate themselves to these endeavours.

As a conclusion, I voice my hope that this study will contribute to a better understanding of the Portuguese in South Africa and of women in general, which will be a positive vibration rippling through the country. We are not only conditioned by our social environment, we can also condition it.

Having in mind all who read this work and who struggle to adapt to new times, new conditions, new philosophies, social and religious, I would like to finish by quoting Deepak Chopra (1996:85):

*Order is another face of chaos,
chaos is another face of order.
The uncertainty you feel inside
is the doorway to wisdom.
Insecurity will always be with the quester -
He continues to stumble but never falls.*

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APPENDIX I¹

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND QUESTIONNAIRE²

(USED ONLY AS A GUIDELINE)

Name:

Location of interview:

I. Background of interviewee

A. Interviewee:

1. Name
2. Ethnic affiliation (Madeira, Mozambique, Angola, Portugal, etc)
3. Address
4. Telephone
5. Generation in SA
6. Birth Place
7. Birth date

¹ This APPENDIX is an altered and expanded version of:

- Linda Anne Bennett's "Appendix A" - Interview schedule for Ethnic Identity study -, part of her dissertation for a PhD on *Patterns of Ethnic Identity among Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in Washington, D.C.* 1976

² The questions were asked in Portuguese. In a few cases both Portuguese and English were used during the interviews.

8. Religious nurturing and education
 9. Highest educational level
 10. Present or primary occupation throughout life
 11. Marital status
 12. Year immigrated to SA - from where?
 13. Year came to Durban
 14. Citizenship status
- B. Spouse of interviewee: same
- C. Children of interviewee: same
- D. Household
1. Number of members
 2. Relationship to interviewee

II. Demographic history and Life history

- A. Demographic history
1. Earliest contacts upon arrival
 - a. Family
 - b. Friends
 - c. New acquaintances
 - d. Feelings about it as a place to live and work
 - e. How much help from other people living there
 - f. Was it a Portuguese neighbourhood?

- g. Were some of the people who helped you from the religious community?
Which?

2. Contacts with family and friends:

- a. How frequently do you write or telephone to family or friends at your place of origin?
- b. Have you returned or visited for the first time or do you plan to visit Portugal?
 - i. When?
 - ii. Where?
- c. Reasons for going

B. Life History

- 1. Meaningful experiences throughout life
- 2. Special skills, abilities or interests of the interviewee
- 3. Observance of holidays and family celebrations of the family of orientation and continuity into adult life.
- 4. Recreation and leisure time activities of the family and among individual members.
- 5. Language usage at home and outside the home.
- 6. Impact of visits to Portugal upon the individual's sense of identity.

III. Family, marriage and social network

A. Family ties

- 1. Frequency of family visits

2. Types of occasions
3. What do you think is different about the different ethnic groups?

B. Marriage

1. What are your feelings about people marrying outside their religious group?
2. How important do you think marriage within the same religious group is to maintain ethnic identity?
 - a. Do you know of some examples of such situations?
3. Regarding mixed marriages what chances do you see in the children being raised within a Catholic tradition? What do you see usually happening in these cases?

C. Social network

1. Who do you consider to be your best friend in Durban?
2. How often do you meet socially with the people you work with?
3. What types of social gatherings do you attend with other Portuguese?
 - a. How frequently?
 - b. Where are they held?
 - c. What kinds of activities are included?
4. Do you feel that you have more in common socially with other Portuguese?
 - a. In what way?
5. Do your children have any Portuguese friends their age?
 - a. How often do they get together?

- b. For what occasions?
- 6. What kinds of social contacts do you have with other Portuguese in SA?
- 7. Where do you think most Portuguese get together socially?
- 8. How much does the Church and congregation contribute to your social life?

IV Occupational history

- 1. Previous and present occupation.
- 2. Are there any other occupations you would prefer to work in now?
- 3. Have you considered taking further schooling?
 - a. In what areas?
- 4. Do you belong to any business or professional associations or labor unions?
- 5. If you were to generalize, what kinds of occupations would you say other Portuguese in Durban tend to work in?

V Membership in associations and organizations

- 1. Which Catholic/religious organizations do you belong to?
- 2. What kind of activities do they sponsor?
- 3. How frequently do you participate in those activities?
- 4. Which other family members participate?
- 5. Would you like it if there were more religious organizations or associations in Durban?
- 6. What non-Portuguese associations or organizations are you a member of?

VI. Language usage and reading habits

A. Language

1. What language do you speak at home?
2. Is there any other language spoken at home?
3. How do you rate your ability to speak and write English?
4. Do you think that the ability to write and speak Portuguese is important to maintain ethnic identity?

B. Reading habits

1. What magazines, periodicals, newspapers do you regularly subscribe to or read?
2. What topics do you like reading?

VII. RELIGION

A. Present religious affiliation

1. Religion raised in as a child
2. Membership in which parish in Durban
 - a. Frequency of attendance
 - b. Does the whole family attend together?
 - c. What non-religious activities in the church are you involved with?
 - d. (Question for parishioners of San José Church):

If you were not a member of the Church of San José how much contact do you think you would have with other Portuguese?

3. What are your feelings about your children marrying within the same religion?
4. What role do you think religion has played and plays now in the ethnic identity for you and your family?

B. Religion and personal identity

1. What role do you think religion has played in forming your identity?
2. How important is religion to you regarding:
 - a. Making decisions
 - b. Choice of values, e.g. honesty, patience, tolerance, acceptance
 - c. Political and racial attitudes
 - d. Emotional comfort
 - e. Control of feelings (discipline)
3. How influential has religion been regarding:
 - a. Your self-image
 - b. Your interpretation of being a woman
 - c. Your attitude towards sex
 - d. Your attitude towards men
 - e. Your attitude towards your husband
4. Have you had any particular religious or spiritual experiences, perhaps dreams or visions that affected your life?
5. Has religion helped your integration, if that is the case, in the Portuguese community in Durban?

6. Has religion helped your integration, if that is the case, in the South African community? How?
7. Has religion helped to maintain your ethnic identity, i.e., the feeling of being Portuguese?
8. How has religion in your life influenced or determined:
 - a. Your social relationships
 - b. Your family relationships
 - c. Your activities
 - d. The maintenance of the Portuguese culture, relative to food, language and relationships?
9. What do you not like about your religion?
10. What could make you leave the Church?
11. If not religious - why did you leave the church?
12. Do you see any single biggest problem with your church?

C. Church teachings and personal devotions

1. How important is for you the devotion to the Virgin Mary? What feelings does it arise in you?
2. Does it influence your identity and your values, especially regarding purity, obedience and humility?
3. Does it have negative connotations of inferiority of women relative to men?
(Mary has to intercede to her own son)
4. Has it had any influence on:
 - a. Inner strength and self-realization

- b. Submissiveness, especially towards men or towards your husband?
- 5. Who's the head of your family?
- 6. Do you pray the rosary? How often?
- 7. Do you go to:
 - a. Mass - how often?
 - b. Meetings - how often?
 - c. Processions - how often?
- 8. Do you go to Confession and receive Holy Communion? How often?
- 9. Should priests be celibate? Why or why not?
- 10. Should women be priests? Why or why not?
- 11. How do you usually pray? (Own prayers, church prayers, meditation, spiritual readings, Bible readings, alone or in church)
- 12. What do you think of:
 - a. Abortion
 - b. Contraception
- 13. What do you think of other religions?

VIII Self and Gender

- 1. If you could go back what would you like to have been?
- 2. What detracted you from being it?
- 3. Did the Church teachings contribute to it? (e.g. Bible readings and meetings, admonitions from the pulpit or in confession, Pope's encyclicals)
- 4. Do you or have you felt alienated, lonely, depressed?

5. Who or what helps you or helped you to overcome that?
6. Do you feel happy with your family relationships?
7. Why?
8. Do you feel happy with your social relationships?
9. Why?
10. Do you have male and female friends?
11. Whom do you trust more, men or women? Why?
12. Do you think that men are different from women?
13. In what sense?
14. Do you think that there are feminine qualities and masculine qualities?
15. Do they apply in general to both sexes or to only one of them? (e.g. "nurturing is particular to women's nature")
16. What do you think of the gay/lesbian movement?

IX Politics

1. When you get together with other Portuguese how much do you like to discuss political issues?
2. Do you prefer to South African or Portuguese politics?
3. Do you prefer any specific political party?
4. What do you think other Portuguese prefer?
5. Should ethnicity become a greater or lesser concern in SA politics?
6. Would you like to see Portuguese involved in politics in SA as Portuguese?
7. What kinds of stands do you think they would take?